DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 281 982 CE 046 863

AUTHOR	Hutchinson, Enid; Hutchinson, Edward
TITLE	Women Returning to Learning.
INSTITUTION	National Extension Coll., Cambridge (England).
PUB DATE	86
NOTE	155p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Extension College, 18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, CB2 2HN, England (9.95 pounds plus 6.00 pounds postage and handling).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Books (010)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; *Adult Education; Continuing Education; Developed Nations; Educational Needs; *Educational Opportunities; Educational Research; Ethnic Groups; Females; Foreign Countries; General Education; Liberal Arts; Lifelong Learning; Minority Groups; Open Education; Postsecondary Education; Program Effectiveness; *Reentry Students; *Retraining; *Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS	*England

ABSTRACT

Part 1 extends a previous study of "fresh start" courses in adult education in England. It focuses on the particular needs of women for renewed educational opportunities in mature life. This part describes and analyzes the provision to meet those needs represented by seven years' further work in Fresh Horizons at London's City Literary Institute and in the Fresh Start courses at the Richmond Adult and Community College. Data are from detailed questionnaires completed by 325 women and 68 men and additional information obtained from smaller numbers enrolled in courses at the Swarthmore Education Centre, Leeds, and in Second Chance Opportunities and Education for Women (SCOPE) courses offered by the YWCA in East Anglia. The statistical elements of the study are summarized and their validity examined in a substantial appendix. Part 2 considers critically other "returning to learning" opportunities created in recent years in various sectors of higher, further, and adult education. It discusses the encouragement given to some by central government through action by the Manpower Services Commission and by promotion of Access courses to assist ethnic minorities. Attention is given to work promoted by the Open Colleges Federation of the North-West, parallel activity in the London region, and initiatives committed to "women only" solutions. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Women Returning to Learning

Enid and Edward Hutchinson

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M Levin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

OE 044 863

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have made possible the production of this book. Our first debt is to the necessarily anonymous body of student informants without whose generous co-operation Part I could not have been written. Nor could we have made much progress without sympathetic assistance from tutors, organisers and administrators. We have particularly in mind the late Dr Ron South, former Principal of the City Lit and Janette Jeffries, presently responsible for Fresh Horizons courses there; Mavis Cunningham, similarly responsible for Fresh Start work at Richmond Adult and Community College; Pam Cole, now at Northern College, who was our Swarthmore, Leeds contact and Mary Lewis and Sheila Bly, Field Officers of the YWCA in East Anglia. A second Pam Cole, a former Fresh Horizons student at the City Lit, helped us with follow-up interviews there and Mavis Cunningham increased our debt to her by doing the same with Fresh Start students at Richmond. Our friend, Grace Atkin, enabled us, once again, to offer the publisher an impeccable typescript.

Lacking an institutional base, we could not have met the substantial expenses involved in an enquiry of this kind without the financial help of the Croft Trust and we are happy to record our thanks to the Chairman Mr Christopher Cadbury, CBE, and his colleagues for their sympathetic interest as well as their practical help. They have further demonstrated it in a substantial way, by putting funds at the disposal of the Educational Centres Association for the encouragement of fresh start courses over a five-year period.

To those named and to the many others who helped us by discussion and comment, we tender our grateful thanks.

Enid and Edward Hutchinson
April, 1986

Copyright © 1986 The National Extension College, 18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2HN.

The NEC is an educational trust providing learning materials and correspondence courses for adults. As a non-profit making company, all income received is used to extend and improve the range of services we provide.

Contents

		Page
	Introduction	1
	Part 1 – The Fresh Start experience	
1	Why women – and what about men?	7
2	Courses and students – London and Richmond	21
3	Motives, intentions and outcomes	39
4	Moving on	50
	Part 2 – Other initiatives	
5	'Return to study' and 'Return to work'	64
6	Open learning – Open College	73
7	Accent on Access	84
8	'Higher and 'further'	94
9	'Adult' and 'continuing' for the class of women	108
	Appendix 1 – Statistical summary	118
	Appendix 2 – Notes and references	137
	Index	143

Tables

1	Educational qualifications in sample of men and women aged 30–39 and 40–49 in 1974–5 and 1981–2 as reported in the *General Household Survey*	16
2	Higher education results of Fresh Horizon male students in relation to earlier education	19
3	Proportions of women in socio-economic groups – Martin and Roberts survey c/f questionnaire respondents reporting full-time employment	29
4	Degree study intentions of women Fresh Horizons students and the numbers of them completing degree courses, so far as known, by 1984	51
5	Degree results of women Fresh Horizons and Fresh Start students in relation to earlier education	56
6	Socio-economic group by own occupation – London full-time and evening women students c/f Martin and Roberts survey	57
7	Comparison of some characteristics of students of the Open College of the North-West and those attending part-time Fresh Horizons courses at the City Lit	79
8	City Lit full-time Fresh Horizons students – school-leaving ages and qualifications	86
9	Comparison of socio-economic groups of Access and Fresh Horizons full-time students	87

Appendix 1 – Statistical summary

A1	The numbers of questionnaires distributed and the numbers returned 'Gone away', assumed received and returned completed	119

A2	Questionnaires distributed, returned 'Gone away' and completed for four years 1976-7 to 1979-80 and three years 1980-1 and 1982-3	119
A3	London – women students: comparison of some personal characteristics between questionnaire respondents and non-respondents	120
A4	Richmond – women students attending part-time day courses: comparison of some personal characteristics between questionnaire respondents and non-respondents	121
A5	FS/FH – women students returning questionnaires – summary of total responses all years	123
A6	FS/FH – men students returning questionnaires – summary of total responses all years	129
A7	Comparison of some personal characteristics of women attending part-time day classes at centres in London, Richmond and Leeds	136

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS APPEARING IN THE TEXT

ACACE	Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education
CAB	Citizens' Advice Bureaux – local centres providing an advice service to individuals
City Lit	Official title of the City Literary Institute, a major Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) adult education institute
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards – a nationally appointed body that awards degrees and validates courses provided by non-university institutions of higher education, e.g. polytechnics
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education – awarded to pupils aged sixteen in England and Wales as a record of school performance by examination in individual subjects
DES	Department of Education and Science
Dip HE (DHE)	A two-year course diplóma intended to serve as a qualification in itself or as a stepping-stone to a degree
EEC	European Economic Community
Eleven plus	An examination at primary-school leaving age that, though largely discarded, still determines, in some areas, whether children shall enter a 'grammar' (i.e. academic) or a 'modern' secondary school
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
GCE	General Certificate of Education – awarded to pupils in England and Wales by examination in individual subjects that provide the basic qualification for admission to higher education and professional life. It is conducted at two levels, 'O' (Ordinary) taken normally at sixteen and 'A' (Advanced) at eighteen. The examinations may also be taken voluntarily, post-school.
HNC	Higher National Certificate – an advanced technical or commercial qualification
MSC	Manpower Services Commission – a government appointed body with responsibility for securing training opportunities
NK	Not known
ONC	Ordinary National Certificate – a qualification for technicians and others, awarded after at least two years of part-time study
OPCS	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

OU	The Open University – provides courses and awards degrees through open learning systems
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SCOPE	Second Chance Opportunities and Education for Women – a fresh start course provided by the YWCA
SEG	Socio-Economic Group
SRN	State Registered Nurse
TOPS	Training Opportunities Scheme of the MSC (qv) – provides training courses for adults
UCCA	Universities Central Council for Admissions
WEA	Workers Educational Association
WOW	Wider Opportunities for Women – 'taster' courses financed by the MSC for women seeking a return to work
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Introduction

We have felt it worthwhile to embark on this further study of the adult education innovation described in our earlier work[1] on the Fresh Horizons courses (now approaching their twentieth year) at the City Lit in London, and some of those that have derived from them, because it provides a validation, much needed in these times, for the philosophy and practice of teaching adults that lie within the liberal tradition of English adult education.

It is now widely recognized, academically, that adults bring a variety of resources to new learning that have been acquired as part of their living experience and that such skills as were acquired during the years of schooling are only the tools by which these can be handled more or less effectively. Experiential learning is unique to each person and attempts made to quantify and approximate it according to the syllabuses and grades of the school and college system quickly fall into trouble. To attempt it is not only a denial of the uniqueness of the experience itself – it shows the incapacity of the graders to think outside the narrow limits which they must justify because, by these, they are judged and rewarded themselves.

Adult education has traditionally been outside the system of rewards and penalties. But experience alone is not enough: new learning and skills are added to the old to inform experience as tutors and students explore together. Sometimes outside validation is sought as a goal and a measuring-rod but this is the choice of the individual. It does not dominate the learning experience so the system allows for open entry and open exit, and the initially less qualified may easily outstrip the better in the outcome.

A narrower regime is part of the Gradgrind practice of today. Courses

1

are squeezed to fit into the criteria of specific training regulations to qualify for the only money available but, more than that, institutions that live by grading and examinations impose their habits of mind on intended open-ended programmes to the detriment of true access.

First steps

Fresh Horizons courses were started by Enid Hutchinson in London's City Lit, an expressly non-examination, liberal arts establishment, maintained by the Inner London Education Authority, in 1966. Setting out to offer students a course of disciplined study for their personal development that might lead them, if they wished, into further academic or vocational studies, the courses have been firmly contained within a non-certificated, open-ended procedure. *Learning Later* gave an account of their first eight years. From a start of one course in 1966, consisting of a total of eight and a half hours of integrated study on two days a week, by 1974 the first full-time course had completed an academic year and three part-time courses, including one for evening students, were permanent features of the City Lit prospectus.

The first course arose out of a perceived special educational need. As people, and particularly women, looked over the offerings at the Autumn enrolment, it became clear that some were putting together a programme of study to satisfy a felt want – 'Brush up your English', a literature class, a hopeful excursion into history or philosophy. When the opportunity came, it was possible to offer a course that would build such elements into an integrated whole.

There was an unformulated demand coming at a pre-vocational level. The educational opportunities, expanded by the 1944 Education Act, had left behind large numbers of women whose schooling had ended prematurely in relation to their abilities and who had reached the time in their family building when they could deploy themselves on a larger stage. There was full employment, a teacher shortage, a child population 'bulge' and a need to find people to serve in the welfare state. The only obvious source of recruits was the considerable body of married women becoming freed, as housewives, by technological innovations in the home. They were the women traditionally excluded from the outside labour-force except in war-time, and there were few ways in which these possible recruits could prepare themselves for full-time education and training. They were already invading evening GCE courses intended for second-go adolescents, because the Ministry of Education formula for admission to teacher training was a minimum of five 'O' levels.

It took time for the authorities to realize that five 'O' levels did not encompass the whole of relevant learning experience but by 1966, so great was the shortfall, special entry had become acceptable and by

1974, some half of the Fresh Horizons students had gone on to higher education or professional training without the sacred symbols. This said, it is important to emphasize that Fresh Horizons courses were never conceived only as 'access' opportunities to higher education. They were intended to be valid in their own right: they are best defined as 'developmental', allowing for self-discovery and growth and for decision-making on future aims and objectives as growth takes place.

Later initiatives

The first course at Richmond emerged to meet a similar mixture of needs. Provision for adult education in the town has grown out of a former local technical institute offering apprenticeship day-release classes and post-school commercial training and some GCE work together with traditional evening offerings of needlework and cookery. As the junior certificate work was hived off to other centres the gap was filled by adult recruitment to a developing programme in the fields of art, humanities, languages and home-crafts as well as to the retained GCE and office skills courses. Unusually in such a transition, the college, now known as the Richmond Adult and Community College, also retained a substantial body of full-time staff. Perhaps unsurprisingly the full-time departmental heads saw little need for further changes or additions to this quite rich programme.

The evidence of a different demand leading to changed attitudes came from sharing in a counselling exercise as a follow-up to an 'Opportunities for Adults' Saturday School held at the college in 1976, when nearly one hundred people, overwhelmingly women, took up the offer of such an interview and made it obvious that there would be takers for a 'Fresh Horizons' type course but there was still staff hesitancy about possible effects on the established GCE work.

In what follows, information is drawn from replies to questionnaires returned by 325 women and 68 men who were students on the courses in London and Richmond between 1976 and 1983 and the validity of that information is examined, in relation to the total number of students in the period, in Appendix 1, Table A1. In addition to the questionnaire responses, we could draw on information available from application forms and course reports at both centres, as to students' backgrounds and their post-course intentions.

We also had the co-operation of the Swarthmore Education Centre in Leeds in circulating the same questionnaire to students from the Fresh Start* courses started there in 1975 to which thirty-seven women

*We use 'fresh start' (without caps.) as a generic term. When referring to the specific course so titled at Richmond, caps. are used as with other titles, notably Fresh Horizons.

and four men replied. In addition, Sheila Bly of the YWCA provided information about fresh-start work undertaken in East Anglia where SCOPE courses were developed by an independent committee in Cambridge. These initiatives on the part of non-statutory bodies, with all the added difficulties of self-funding, emphasize the dilatoriness, and should prick the consciences, of the responsible public education authorities.

Courses conceived in fresh-start terms have always been related to the needs of women, who continue to represent an under-used resource on a large scale. Part-time day courses, where attendance is voluntary, are likely to attract family-embroiled women whose work in the home is most concentrated in the earlier morning and evening hours. But not many men, either, have joined the women who work outside the home and are the mainstay of the evening courses at the City Lit and the Saturday and evening courses now held at Richmond. The replies to the questionnaires circulated for this study reveal the history of succeeding periods of paid employment, home and child-care and return to employment that is now the common pattern of most women's lives. They also illustrate the short focal length of girls' initial education and training, which results in the under-use of their intellectual capacity until it is later stimulated by suggestions that their horizons have been limited by out-of-date social expectations. Even when men's initial education has been limited, they have, particularly in more recent years, had a greater variety of choices in training and access to a promotion ladder, contributing to higher status and better pay. Their progress has not been interrupted by child-bearing and child-rearing and the need to start again. Only when other factors emerge – wrong work and career choice in the first place, and, increasingly, unemployment or threat of redundancy or loss of promotion – do men appear on these courses. This different significance of the fresh-start approach for women and for men and our reasons for concentrating attention on women's needs, are presented, as a necessary preliminary, in Chapter 1.

Decade of developments

It is ten years since we examined the first eight years of Fresh Horizons courses at the City Lit: the Richmond courses will soon have ten years' history also and, in the meantime, other offerings which claim similar or associated aims have emerged under various auspices. These have included adult education centres, university extra-mural departments, polytechnics and voluntary organizations. Following the example of the Open College of the North-West, established in 1976 as a federation of (for the most part) colleges of further education, providing agreed access to higher education, new consortia have come into being making

similar agreed 'access' provision. Some eighty such institutions offering up to one hundred courses are described in a recent publication.[2] 'Access' was also the name given to courses aimed at improving the chances of entry into the teaching and caring professions by members of ethnic minority communities. Many of these ventures are first-time offerings by the providing institutions and they bear the marks of their provenance in their concern for validation, certification and syllabus creation – a development that is discussed at length later.

It becomes an additional purpose of this book to review the growth of these phenomena and the causes contributing to them and, in the light of our own studies and other publications, to assess their significance in relation to the educational needs and experiences of mature people. However described, unless there are built-in avoidance factors of organization and presentation, all such courses will attract a majority of women: if they are advertised in terms of women's needs there will be a total female response. Some, indeed, may have special permission from the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) to be designated as 'women only' courses, it being one of the ironies of the equality legislation that the minority social and economic status of women must not be used to threaten established majority rights.

The period of our study was covered by the UN Decade for Women and the wider dissemination of the 'Women's Movement' in this country. The implications of fertility control and the social accompaniments of demographic change had filtered through the life-styles to the overt consciousness of women, even though equality of opportunity could be vainly sought and attitudes changed slowly. These changes and the educational needs they uncover are discussed in Chapter 1.

The needs, experiences and responses of the women students attending courses at the City Lit and the later established ones at Richmond, between 1976 and 1983, are explored in Chapters 2 to 4. The satisfactions, dissatisfactions and outcomes (over a period of eight years for students attending in the earlier part of the period) are recounted very largely in the respondents' own words. These responses, and frequently the letters accompanying completed questionnaires, contain vivid evocations of their reasons for joining and their experiences in and outcomes from attending the courses. Since numbers and proportions of numbers in various groups relating to these and other matters are frequently stated, it may properly be asked whether they are a fair representation of the total numbers involved. We believe that the answer is 'Yes' and that this answer is justified by the figures given in Appendix 1, Tables A3 and A4.

It is our hope that this book, together with its forerunner, will provide a resource for all who are concerned with the education of adults. Covering between them a period of nearly twenty years, they tell some-

thing about the provenance of those who return to education as a voluntary act. Fresh-start students are not so very different from the host of people who annually look to other elements of the adult education service for interest, stimulus and learning satisfactions. Our questionnaire respondents provided information on their years of compulsory education and its immediate outcome, on work and post-school training for work and what they recalled of employer-provided training. We asked what other non-certificate education had been sought since leaving school – what use had been made of the usual offerings of evening institutes and adult centres over the years. Replies showed that the respondents had frequently been aware of them and they 'they had not been indifferent to the calls of more formal learning. For some this had been habitual: more often sporadic attempts had been made, over the years, to reach out towards learning and skill development. That they were not wholly satisfied can be gauged from the brevity of some of these encounters – six weeks of 'Beginners' French'; a winter's 'Painting'; 'some lessons' in cookery. Such replies raise questions for the providers: many hazards stand in the way of the adult, with job and family, feeling the need for betterment, whether it is a weekly commitment to keep-fit or to put the final seal on an 'O' level attempt by actually turning up for the exam. If we can find out something about who they are, what makes them come, why they fade out or persist, we will be better providers. One lesson is clear: there are many people, particularly women, functioning at less than their potential capacity. They respond to an intellectual challenge and to the demand for a learning response. Providers need to be alerted to the dangers of being shunted into the 'recreational only' siding.

The way we offer that challenge is also what this book is about: many people are deterred from responding by the failure they have experienced as built into the educational system. In offering them the chance to venture again we must learn how not to build in failure again, by providing different criteria for entry and exit. A notable feature of the replies to questionnaires is the warmth and frequency of tributes to the way in which tutors on fresh-start courses had led their students, with understanding, through the encounters with unfamiliar language and concepts. But the empathy came with concepts of approach and the deployment of tutorial skills and strategies that could create confidence and achievement far more extensively, if they were more widely recognized and encouraged.

Part 1

The Fresh Start experience

1	Why women – and what about men?	7
2	Courses and students – London and Richmond	21
3	Motives, intentions and outcomes	39
4	Moving on	50

I
Why women - and what about men?

Though fresh-start education is open and available to both sexes, it is clear that it is most enthusiastically sought and received by women and it is to the needs of women, in particular, that this book, in title and substance, is addressed. The full-time London course has a more even balance of the sexes but in that instance there is a process of positive discrimination in selection of students. As a general prerequisite for acceptance to that course, applicants must not possess academic qualifications that would normally be required for entry to higher education. Also precluded are people who have tried and failed GCE 'A' levels and special consideration is given to those suffering from various forms of educational disadvantage. Moreover, more men, especially if single and with a maintenance grant on offer, are free to attend full-time education. 37 per cent of the women, as against 63 per cent of the men attending the full-time course, who completed questionnaires, were single and 18 per cent of the women were single parents: women have to contend with more than educational disadvantages. Families always impose their own limitations and women with children will weigh up carefully the advantages or otherwise of full-time attendance and obligations.

The numbers of men on the evening courses and even on the part-time day ones, in London, increased towards the end of the period under review, probably reflecting growing concern about unemployment and the need to become better equipped to meet the hazards of the changing economic scene. Even so they numbered less than a third of the evening-course enrolments and were not more than one in eight of the part-time day students.

A class of their own

As indicated in the Introduction, there is, indeed, such a fundamental difference between the education, training and subsequent employment and life experience of women and men that the phenomenon of fresh-start education occurs and continues to occur, essentially within a female dimension.

The difference starts at birth. 'What will be be?' says the proud father who starts straightaway to plan a future for his son. The reception of a daughter is much more likely to be determined in terms of a pretty pink garment and a comment on her looks. Even 'equal opportunity' parents are aware that she will be less likely to have a life that can be predicted with any degree of probability. There is, by now, a wealth of evidence, from research into rearing and schooling practices, of the uncertainties lying within girls' expectations while boys are directed into achievement.[1] Such practices are heavily reinforced by social attitudes. While adulthood urges men towards the traditional need to provide for a family and the achievement of the economic means to do so, a family for women means, in social terms, retirement from the employment scene, unpaid work and a reduced economic status in her own right.

Marriage and divorce

The problem has changed and more acutely for women, in the last thirty years. Until the mid-1950s there was still a recognizable need for parents to steer their daughters to careers as possible alternatives to marriage and motherhood. The old working-class saying held good – 'A girl must have a living in her fingers.' The memories of two world wars were still sufficiently alive for widowhood to be reckoned with and there was widespread social awareness of a considerable number of single women who had not found marriage partners. 'Old maid', 'maiden aunt', and 'surplus women' were expressions in common use. In the nineteenth century and through the early part of the twentieth, the shortage of marriageable males helped to fuel the demand of the early women's movement for access to education and the professions. It provided a scene for women writers of the time. Charlotte Bronte's unhappy Caroline Helstone, preparing for a future that she thinks denies her marriage, contemplates the lot of the spinsters of the parish:

> Look at the numerous families of girls in the neighbourhood – the Armitages, the Birtwhistles, the Sykes – the sole aim of every one of them is to be married but the majority will never marry, they will die as they now live. They scheme, they plot, they dress to ensnare husbands. The gentlemen turn them to ridicule. They say – I have

heard them say it with sneering laughs . . . the matrimonial market is over-stocked.[2]

But not so today: in about the mid-1950s the position went into reverse. Within the marrying age-groups there was by that time an equality of numbers; by the 1961 census, probably for the first time in our demographic history, there was a surplus of marriageable males. By 1982 there were nearly a million more males than females, aged 16 to 44, without marriage partners. At the beginning of the period covered by this study, the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys commented in the *Demographic Review*: 'A feature of the changing structure of population to which relatively little attention has been given has been the rising proportion of men in the population . . . this change will make it difficult for men to find marriage partners. The marriage "squeeze" had already resulted in an increase in the marriage rates for women in relation to those of men.' The immediate response to the fact, at the time of the 1971 Census, was largely to congratulate women on their good fortune – 'Husbands for all' was one headline.

There were indeed and the pressure was on the young women: over the period from 1951 there was a reduction in the age of marriage for women and the proportion of first marriages involving a teenage bride grew from 17 per cent in 1951 to 29 per cent in 1961. By 1971, 85 per cent of women under 30 were married and one in three brides was under 20. If this was an unconscious response to demographic change, reinforced by the relative affluence and rising standards of the time, it had, nevertheless, an immediate effect on the expectations of young women.

There was little time between school and marriage, and between marriage and starting a family, for girls to build a career. Even those who acquired better educational qualifications were under pressure to relinquish their expectations for the satisfactions of a family life.[3]

Still in her twenties, a mother with two children already in the junior school, could say to a fresh-start tutor in 1976, 'I want to know what I can do with the rest of my life'. For family completion began to take place earlier: women throughout all social classes adopted the contraceptive pill and were settling for an average family of something like 1.7 children. Women were still housebound but it was for a limited period and not a life sentence.

There were also other realities looming: with the change in the sex ratio, earlier marriage and acceptance of unmarried partnering, has come a destabilization of the married state. Divorces had already doubled in the years before the Divorce Act of 1971. They had redoubled by 1972: it is now expected that one in three marriages will break up. 26 per cent of the women respondents attending the London

part-time courses and 20 per cent of those on Richmond courses were single parents. Other respondents told of marriage break-up as part of the fresh-start experience, embarking on the course being, to some extent, an experimental venture into independence. 'I realised I had been basically unhappy for a long time', wrote one woman, 'and I have now divorced.' She goes on to describe herself as happy in a new career.

But even if one in three marriages is likely to break up, two in three are surviving. Our respondents were looking at the circumstances of their lives very carefully in deciding how far they should take their fresh starts. Some became bitterly aware of living under patriarchal conditions: others got the message across to husbands with traditional assumptions of marriage as a household service economy: for both sides, fresh start was a learning experience.

Men will have to come to terms with the fact that the recent removal of a wife's right to maintenance frees her from the obligation to accept a patriarchal system. The Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 is too recent in its operation for much evidence of its working to have accumulated but court decisions, even before the Act, increasingly required the wife to find a job.

Very much the outcome of a campaign by well-off husbands who resented the capacity of their ex-wives (and their lawyers) to extract maintenance for life, it nevertheless removes the wife's long-term interest in her husband as a sole bread-winner. If the courts are decreeing that she should make herself self-sufficient on the break-up of marriage, she has a right to demand that she is not impeded from maintaining a separate economic identity during marriage, if only as an insurance against its dissolution.

In pushing through the Act, the government did not concern itself with the lost earning power of married women and made no provision for practical financial help for re-education and training on divorce. Sensible court decisions should now take this into account. The evidence coming through from many of our respondents was that enrolment in fresh-start courses was often a first step in reviewing their positions as wives.

Women and employment

Women with smaller and earlier completed families and better equipped homes, reducing the former toil of housework, returned increasingly to outside work. The possession at the time of easily marketable skills at the typewriter or the telephone brought many women like those in our study back into the office or into part-time work in shops and the like. In their 1980 research, Martin and Roberts[4] show that 60 per cent of their sample of married and co-habiting women of working age were in

fact working, just over half of them part-time. Allowing for 5 per cent said to be 'unemployed' and including women formerly married, the proportion counted as economically active was over 65 per cent.

The response of women to the offer of a fresh-start course has to be seen against this background. As school- and college-leavers they entered the work-force for a period of time largely determined by the birth of their first child. Even when there was a possibility, in a minority of occupations, of mounting a career ladder, it was a normal expectation that upward progress would come to a stop. For the greater part of occupations open to them – with 75 per cent in the clerical grades – the maximum advance had been made by the time the first child was conceived. As Eileen Byrne has written: 'Secretarial training is skills-based with no transfer value. There is no ladder with rungs labelled junior management, senior management, executive, above the solid base of shorthand and typing.'[5] Reviewing their situation, there was every reason why potential returners should look at what had led them into this trap and fasten on to the need to return to the educational process abandoned years before.

The title of this chapter focuses attention on the need to separate much of what happens to women from rationalizations that derive from men's experience of economic activity. The evidence from completed questionnaires, as well as from such other studies as we have mentioned, is that a woman's occupational status fluctuates in relation to personal circumstances in a way that a man's does not. No man becomes unemployable because he becomes a father; most women do when they become mothers. No man plummets to the bottom of the job ladder because he moves his residence – he usually moves because of improvement in status; his wife must usually start again on the lower rungs. Most parents of boys try to encourage them into jobs that will ensure a livelihood in the fullest meaning of the word. The vision of girls as well as that of their parents is limited by the expectation of marriage and child-rearing. On returning to the labour market, after increasingly shorter periods of absence, women find themselves working part-time with reduced status and with no accumulated benefits or rights. The work they put in while rearing and working for a family doesn't enter into the Gross National Product although that of a paid surrogate does. Nor does it count for 'transferable' experience when applying for jobs.

The Registrar-General's socio-occupational classifications have the male working world as their basis; they were devised at a time when the large majority of employees were men working in manufacturing industries. According to Martin and Roberts the schema 'may be criticised for failing to discriminate adequately between the jobs women do in terms of both the level and range of skill the jobs cover' and that 'many of the categories in which women's occupations are concentrated

encompass a wider range of jobs than is the case in typically male categories'.[6] All of which tends to minimize the response of employers to the activity of women: an employer has been known to say that he doesn't employ women in his firm even though his secretary has just brought him a bunch of letters to sign and a cup of tea for his visitor.

Marginalization and misconceptions

The MSC has taken to recognizing that women may have special problems and though they are numerically a majority in the population, puts them in a category along with 'racial minorities and the disabled', so marginalizing its responsibility for about ten million of the country's work-force, its need for training and for continued employment at the most effective level.[7] This 'employer-led' attitude is matched, in another context, by left-wing critics of adult education. The presence of women in majority numbers in adult education classes is deplored as being an inordinate capture of opportunities by 'middle-class' women. Estimating women's needs according to the unsatisfactory socio-economic classifications noted above and tying them in with husbands' occupations, such critics ignore the sort of education and employment data revealed by the present survey. In the circumstances of marriage and family, few women have resources of their own to call on unless they can find paid work outside the home. Even the small amount of money available to mothers as child benefit was shown to be 'important' or 'very important' to 89 per cent of women, almost all of whose husbands were earning more than £9,000 a year.[8] 'It's my one thing I can fall back on, my bit of independence' was one comment. In fact, dependent women can be seen as the true proletariat in the original meaning of the word, having no property except in their children.

The usual classifications thus proving inadequate and misleading, it is best to see women as a class of their own, and the largest class numerically, within the population. It is true that, just as there are many working classes, even beyond the OPCS classifications of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, including the wavering line that can be drawn between the skilled manual and skilled non-manual, so, within the class of 'women', there is a range of different circumstances of living standards and access to income. Yet within the class as a whole, women experience a more restricted entry to independent occupations and opportunities deriving from their place in society, than is true of working-class males as a whole, who do not experience personal dependency as a direct consequence of starting a family. This is not to say that we should ignore the greater disadvantages of those women – or men – who have minimal early education and are impoverished by early or later circumstances in their lives. But in making a plea for priority for

them, we should not make, as is sometimes done, offensive comparisons based on class assumptions. Naomi McIntosh commented on such attitudes in relation to the start of the Open University. 'Many people, as the OU started its courses in 1971, feared it might become "a haven for housebound *Guardian* housewives". Others viewed the expansion of educational opportunities for women as a priority akin to the problems of expanding opportunities for that other major group – the working class.'[9] In seeking greater opportunities for those who may be held to be severely disadvantaged by reason of social background or racial prejudice, it would be wrong to compensate by neglect of those in the 'class of women' whose potential has been ignored or reduced by gender discrimination.

Wasted potential

The evidence from the experiences reviewed in this study is that there is a vast reserve within the population, of relatively young and early middle-aged women with completed families, who are under-educated in relation to their potential. They left school without qualifications because a job beckoned or with 'O' levels only when they might have stayed on to take 'A' levels or after 'A' levels chose not to enter higher education. As our survey respondents reveal, whatever their educational level – even with near-graduate status – they were rarely accorded opportunities by employers to extend their expertise in work training and experience. While they were at home, younger women were becoming better qualified, more were taking some school-leaving qualifications with more at 'A' level and more were entering higher education. There is competition to be met from better-qualified younger women on returning to the labour market where accumulated life and management skills of the domestic years have little status although they represent a significant learning experience. Recognition of this is part of the fresh-start build-up of confidence. 'Valuing your experience' courses, introduced by Phoebe Lambert, have become part of the programme of Hillcroft College since 1983. *A Tutors' Handbook* collating material from the courses, funded by the MSC, is intended for general use.[10] Given confidence to transfer such acquired learning ability into appropriately designed fresh-start courses, women are ready for a leap forward, bypassing the intermediate grading stages of the formal education system.

Men's participation

Our primary concern is with the impact of the fresh-start approach on women's needs for renewal of educational opportunity. Nevertheless, the courses discussed are open to both sexes: it is proper to review,

briefly, men's participation in them if only to sharpen the main thrust of the study by the contrasts afforded.

In the period covered, a total of 140 men was enrolled for all the London courses and 24 for those at Richmond. Allowing for men whose questionnaires were returned 'gone away', we can only assume that contact was made with up to 124 and of these 68 completed and returned them. We know, from the facts recorded in their applications, to what extent the non-respondents may have differed, in some respects, from those whose questionnaire replies were available for analysis. So far as concerns the 67 men attending London full-time courses, there are few discernible differences between the two groups. They correspond closely as regards early educational experience: the non-respondents tend to be younger with more of them single and working in manual trades, and rather fewer are recorded as opting for higher education at the end of their Fresh Horizons courses.

Men and the family

The response of women to the challenge of a 'fresh start' arises in part from the considerable changes affecting traditional patterns of marriage, family size, housework and working life outside the home that are part of this half-century's experience. Much of this change is external to men's lives: their domestic life accommodates to it. There is indeed a bonus in comfort with fewer children around the house and a wife's part-time income shoring up the family finances and providing, perhaps, a few luxuries. It is noteworthy that so many women respondents are concerned that the changes in family living they are instituting shall be carefully orchestrated to maintain harmony in the home. Where change has not been acceptable, the decision to go ahead or to retreat has been a prime concern of the woman partner.

Men's working lives may have had to accommodate new techniques and organizational change but the working day has maintained its pattern. Only when facing or threatened with unemployment, job insecurity and early retirement, does the need to review a life pattern impose itself. Even so, the 67 men who completed questionnaires were not, while making their 'fresh start', either as typical of their sex as a whole or as affected by the circumstances surrounding their new venture, as were the women. Two-thirds of them were single – nearly three-quarters unpartnered if we count also those who were separated or divorced. Few of them were members of households with children and few had to make family adjustments to take the courses. 'Left domestic tasks to wife' was one man's laconic comment. Yet they had their share of domestic upheavals: nine respondents were involved in divorce or separation from a partner. One man on the evening courses regarded it,

after a divorce, as 'one of the things that helped to occupy my mind and I enjoyed meeting people'. Some of the seven men in this group on the full-time course were using it partly to establish a new pattern in their personal lives. 'Time taken to recover was used to assess future prospects', wrote one, and from others came such comment as: 'separation from wife and family called for reappraisal of life – released me from the treadmill: quiet evenings led to keener perception of inner discontents' and 'relieved for the most part – painful of course'.

Though one or two mention involvement in child care, it does not seem to have been their whole-time responsibility as it was with the divorced and separated women. One man on the evening course found himself 'drifting away from home and family' but others noted better relations – 'improved kinship with children studying'; 'encouragement from the family' and, delightfully, 'The general feeling was summed up by my youngest son before the course started. He presented me with a book to put my notes in. He wrote on the side "Well done, dad, I'm proud of you".'

Men's work experience

The scope and range of the men's employment re-emphasizes the different routes taken by boys and girls when leaving school and the differences in opportunities offered to them. Over one-third of the men as a whole were in skilled or partly-skilled manual employment while the women were chiefly employed in skilled non-manual occupations. This partly reflects the statistical influence of respondents from the full-time course where selection by reference to earlier educational deficiencies was at work. But over the period of the lives of our respondents, it also connects with the relatively greater take-up by boys of higher education and their wider training opportunities if they entered work with good school-leaving qualifications. Such men, for the most part, have little need to look for a 'fresh start'. The *General Household Survey*, examining the qualifications held by adults in Great Britain in relation to fathers' occupations, commented:

> Men with fathers in manual occupations were more than three times as likely as women from a similar background to have a degree: among people from professional or intermediate non-manual backgrounds the ratio was about 2 to 1. Sons of manual workers were one-and-a-half times more likely than daughters to have qualifications between 'A' and degree but among people whose fathers had professional or intermediate non-manual occupations, the proportion with qualifications at this level was higher for women than for men.[11]

Table 1 shows that, although the numbers with educational qualifications, including degree level, have increased during the past decade, the *relative* position of mature women has not improved.

Table 1 *Educational qualifications in sample of men and women aged 30–39 and 40–49 in 1974–5 and 1981–2 as reported in the* General Household Survey

	women				men		
	qualifications				qualifications		
	higher %	other %	none %		higher %	other %	none %
Aged 30–39				*Aged 30–39*			
1974–5	11	29	60	1974–5	15	39	46
1981–2	14	38	47	1981–2	23	39	38
Aged 40–49				*Aged 40–49*			
1974–5	9	21	70	1974–5	13	31	56
1981–2	11	29	60	1981–2	17	34	49

In considering the educational needs of mature men and women we must, therefore, have regard to this backlog of opportunity that affects women more than men. Opportunities have improved throughout the whole social structure more for boys than for girls. There will, therefore, be fewer men looking for fresh-start courses based on a recovery of such an initial loss. They are there but their needs have other dimensions, only partly gender-imposed. That they do, in fact, have such a dimension is illustrated even within the experience we can isolate from our group of respondents. Among them were a number who went from school to some form of skill or apprenticeship training, the approved outlet for 'non-academic' boys but not for girls. They had jobs such as tool-maker, draughtsman, sheet-metal-worker, plumber, welder, chef, litho operator. The work experience recorded was almost all continuous and full-time but discontent with original career choices was revealed: for example, an engineering apprenticeship with day-release, intended to lead to a National Certificate in Engineering, was not completed due to 'total lack of interest and a constant feeling of boredom in class'. Many of those listed above did not remain within their original field of work. Others who were not put to a trade recorded a succession of different types of work over the years, e.g. 'Seaman, labourer, gar-

dener, factory'; 'Boy soldier, shipping clerk, building labourer' and, for the longest period of work, 'waiter and barman'. A respondent with twenty-one years of full-time work from leaving school at 14 listed 'van-boy, rock-and-roll band, builder's labourer, bill-poster, park-keeper'.

Over the period of their working lives it had been possible, in the London area, to swan around a variety of semi- and unskilled jobs without loss of income – earning, in fact, quite well as single men without family responsibilities, as most of them were. On the whole, the men here represented lost job status as they went along. They had rejected or been rejected by career-line upward social mobility and some had turned towards a leisure interest – acting and music in three cases – for a more interesting life.

It is very difficult to generalize about the men on part-time courses in either London or Richmond. They are few in number – altogether forty-one completed questionnaires. They spread over the age-groups and a range of occupations, manual and non-manual, calling for the most part on specific skills frequently acquired with the help of part-time certificated study after leaving school. A floor-layer had a four-year apprenticeship in upholstery; a structural engineer had spent five years working for Ordinary and Higher National Certificates. Several others had done ONC studies in electrical engineering and technical drawing or taken RSA courses in book-keeping; a cab-driver had spent eighteen months 'getting the knowledge'.

Although several were working in clerical or administrative jobs in industry and commerce, they clearly felt dissatisfied with their progress or were anxious to avoid getting into a rut, e.g. a young civil servant, involved in union activities, wanted to gain a more solid educational base. Many of these part-time students did achieve a change of direction as is evidenced by the eighteen who went on to further study full-time and four to part-time, after their fresh-start courses. Most of these only entered higher education in later years covered by the survey. The little that is known of the results they achieved is summarized in Table 2.

Men moving on

The men who were most clearly intending to make a major change were those who were accepted for the full-time London course. Sixteen of the twenty-four respondents said it was their intention at the outset to seek higher education or a job change and, in the event, twenty-one decided to apply for higher education at the end of the Fresh Horizons course. We know what happened to those who had either graduated or given up by 1984 and we also have the results for seven non-respondents who had reported them to Fresh Horizons tutors: among them were

some of those whose questionnaires were returned 'gone away'. Of the respondents who obtained Second Class degrees we know that three left school at or below age 15, three at 16 and one at 19. Apart from the last, the only school-leaving qualifications obtained were a single 'O' level by one, and two RSAs by another. Something of these degree results and of the backgrounds of those who achieved them is summarized in Table 2. It can be added that the men ranged in age from 21 to 48 when starting the Fresh Horizons course and only one had attended apprenticeship, day-release or evening classes after school.

The three respondents who decided against going on to higher education nevertheless expressed their satisfaction with the Fresh Horizons course itself. One commented:

> Fresh Horizons was an invaluable experience for me. It shook my ideas radically. Although it has thrown me into a mild state of confusion about what to do next I have no regrets. My employment is much the same as it was but I am able to see more clearly what it is I am doing. Biding my time and building my own modular (computer) course based upon areas of interest open to me is what I am embarking on. The year back in the work-place after full-time education has given me a better insight into myself.

Another wrote: 'I think it has been a great bridge for me. I feel more confident I can do the work I want to do. The tutors were marvellous with us.'

Courses – single-sex or mixed?

The responses of the men on all courses raise questions as to what should be done about them if their numbers increase, as they are likely to do. From time to time women respondents on what, by their timing, become 'women only' courses, have pondered in their replies as to whether the absence of men was an advantage or not. One Richmond woman wrote:

> I think the Fresh Start courses are very relevant and very important . . . I also think it would be a good thing if more men could be encouraged to take part in them. I don't think there were any on the course I did . . . I also found the women extremely supportive but perhaps, in contradiction to my previous statement, this was because we were all women.

At meetings of women fresh-start tutors, all of whom are concerned with the need to develop women's confidence in themselves, 'women only' courses have had strong advocates. The domination of men in mixed groups, particularly in discussion, has been a very revealing

Table 2 *Higher education results of Fresh Horizons male students in relation to earlier education*

	class of degree etc.							school-leaving age					school-leaving quals.					
	1st	2.1	2.2	3	pass DHE	NK	gave up	15	16	17	18	NK	'A's	5 'O's	1–4 'O's	none	NK	totals
London:																		
full-time	-	2	9	1	3	2	8	13	10	-	2	-	2	2	7	14	-	25
evening	-	3	1	-	1*	-	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	3	†	1	-	5

*Diploma in Vocational Guidance
†One with 2 CSEs

Notes (i) From the London part-time day course, five men were attending degree courses at the time of the survey but no results were available.

(ii) From the Richmond Saturday course, six men were attending degree courses at the time of the survey but no results were available. No men had gone on to degree courses after attending Richmond part-time day courses.

(iii) For comparable facts relating to women see Table 5, p. 56.

element of feminist research. But some tutors of fresh-start courses have demurred: the courses have so clearly attracted and been made attractive to women, that it seems to be men who must fall into line. Usually few in number, they are known to be sometimes deterred by the competence of the women, failing to adjust to a situation where they cannot assume dominance as a right. In the evening and Saturday classes, recruiting mainly working men and women, there is some degree of identity of interest. The men are there because they want to improve limited prospects, the women because better prospects are largely denied them – more than one marriage has occurred within these circumstances!

With a workless future promised – or now here – for many, more men may have the opportunity to build new lives and develop natural talents atrophied by the specializations of earning demands. Perhaps in this they can learn from women's experience. A recent 'Replan' publication by the NIACE – *Education for the Adult Unemployed*[12] – reviews and discusses some of the implications of long-term unemployment for women and men and what adult education can offer in relation to it.

2
Courses and students - London and Richmond

In this and succeeding chapters we will be looking at the replies received to questionnaires, from women students in particular, who attended the Fresh Horizons courses at the City Lit in London between 1976 and 1983, i.e. over a period of seven academic years, and those from the Fresh Start courses at the Richmond Adult and Community College throughout the same period. A brief summary of the establishment and development of the various courses may be helpful at the outset.

The City Lit

By 1976 the City Lit courses were thoroughly established. The two part-time day courses that students attend for a total of eight and a half hours on two days weekly for thirty weeks had been running for ten years. Together they provide places for forty students annually. Over the period, from their start in 1966 to the end of the period of our present study, something like 650 students could be reckoned as having passed through them. They are very popular and recruitment, on a first-come, first-served basis, is completed in May each year for a September start. The one evening course, started in 1968, recruits up to twenty students who meet on two evenings for a total weekly period of six hours, also for thirty weeks, and has a similar recruitment pattern.

In 1973, a full-time course of three terms was established. Applicants who are resident within the area of the Inner London Education Authority are eligible for discretionary grants that cover tuition costs and maintenance. Would-be students from the areas of other education authorities may apply for similar financial help but are less likely to be successful. The closing date for applications each year is 31 March and

up to ninety applicants are interviewed for the twenty places available. The criteria are not only that the applicant will benefit from the course and can give some evidence to that effect in writing and discussion, but that he or she also has special educational needs derived, e.g. from poor opportunities of early schooling or lack of access to qualifying certificates at the end of school life. Those who are not accepted for the full-time course are offered opportunities of enrolling on one of the part-time courses.

Between 1966 and 1983, about 1,250 women and men took part in the full range of Fresh Horizons courses; in the period of the present study, 1976–83, 373 women and 140 men have been students on one or other of the courses. The tutorial team covering all the courses has grown in the period from two to three full-time tutors and from 500 additional part-time tutor-hours to 1,500. The tutors work to an integrated syllabus and meet about twelve times a year for consultation. For these consultations the part-time tutors receive payment. Over the years this team has also accommodated, as related new ventures, an Open Study course (linking study-skills with an individual choice of subjects from the general City Lit programme), 'Break-through' and 'Using your experience' courses. The subjects approached in all Fresh Horizons courses include study skills, literature, sociology, history and mathematics as the basis for a programme that allows for some optional choices.

Richmond Adult and Community College

The first course at Richmond Adult (now Adult and Community) College was held in 1976. Recruitment was for a two-term course of four and a half hours on one day a week and, as it was over-subscribed, a second post-Christmas course was formed lasting into the summer and from then on, two courses of two terms each have been the normal mid-week offering for each September enrolment. Provision was made in the earlier years for a supplementary GCE or other course to be taken by each student. Some students did not want to take a GCE subject and the cohesion and camaraderie of the full-day Fresh Start programme was missed when joining another group as an isolated member. However this extra element did not survive the college budget trimmings and neither did an increased course length to thirty weeks. By 1980, the twenty-four-week course had been reinstated and a post-Easter six-week course was added for which an additional fee was charged.

A similar four and a half hour course on Saturdays was started in 1979 and the full programme has grown to include an adaptation of the basic formula at an evening centre and a second-year continuation course for students wanting a longer preparation for advanced study. The

students covered by our survey were from the two annual mid-week and the later established Saturday courses. The timetable provides for a total of seventy-two periods of one and a half hours each, taken over two terms. Each of the six subjects – study skills, literature, psychology, economic history, social studies and science – is allotted twelve periods, i.e. one term's study. The Head and Deputy Head of the Liberal and General Studies Department of the college have usually taken a subject each; the others are taught by part-time tutors one of whom has acted as Course Tutor. This involves recruiting and interviewing potential students, keeping contact with the tutorial team and undertaking counselling on the courses. With upward of one hundred students annually to be covered, this has now been made a half-time post. Over the period covered by the study, something like 400 tutor-hours (including the contribution of the full-time staff) have been allocated to the courses annually. Tutors meet for consultation about twice a term, usually in the lunch hour; no payment is made for this.

Within each of the subjects in the package deal of Fresh Horizons and Fresh Start courses, there is a fair amount of student discretion as to content and syllabus emphasis. The subjects are intended to reinforce and cross-fertilize each other. An undertaking to do written work and reading at home is part of the bargain made with the student but it is not made a hard one. From an easy start, progress is made to more demanding study and an end-of-course major essay or project of up to 5,000 words is presented by most students on the final day.

Funding

Comparison of the provision made for these courses at the two centres in question illustrates how differences in the funding of adult education, even by neighbouring authorities, serve to mould courses' development. The ILEA has a long and firm commitment to the education of the whole community and in 1982-3, the last year covered by this study, the fee for the thirty-week more extensive part-time day class was £49.50 compared to £54.00 for the twenty-four week Richmond equivalent, although Richmond is noteworthy among the boroughs for the extensive provision it makes for adult education. Both authorities do provide for reduced fees for students on social security but for women, meeting fees from the house-keeping purse, ever-increasing levels undoubtedly deny some of them the opportunity of the education they want.

Personal factors and relationships

It is clear that the character of early education, employment and family

circumstances very much affects women's responses to an offered possibility of educational renewal in maturity. For that reason questionnaire respondents were asked to relate their educational histories, the schools they went to, at what age they left and what post-school education and training, in and out of work, they had and what kind of work they were doing or had done. The facts elicited from the 325 women on different courses – full-time, part-time day and evening – at the City Lit and the Richmond Adult College, who provided information, are summarized in Appendix 1, Table A5.

Such personal factors bear directly on women's disposable time so that no one timing of courses in the day or week will accommodate them all equally well. Courses provided full- or part-time, in the day or the evening, are likely to have, in some degree, different clienteles as appears in the following consideration of replies from women pursuing part-time day courses in London and Richmond and the full-time and evening courses at the City Lit.

Part-time students by day

The two groups of respondents from the part-time day courses, 94 from the City Lit and 137 from Richmond, are very comparable. Nearly half in each case were between 30 and 39 years of age and one-third were between 40 and 49. Almost all of them had children at home but more of the Richmond women had children under the age of 5. When making a serious return to education and considering possible outcomes from it, these family women are much aware of the constraints imposed by the responsibilities of motherhood and the difficulties of combining concentrated study with the ever-present interruptions of children's demands. Moreover, from a fifth to a quarter of our respondents were coping alone as single parents. One of the trigger points for the 'fresh-start' initiative most quoted by the women was the fifth birthday of the youngest child. They were heavily into concern for the next generation and very conscious of any educational deficiencies of their own.

Interrupted schooling

Their early schooling reflects much of the limited outlook of parents, and frequently of themselves as girls, as to their intellectual and employment potential. Over half left school at or below today's minimum school-leaving age. Those who stayed on were evidently not considered or did not consider themselves 'university material': the national figures indicate the slow recognition of the claim for extension of university education to girls.

We asked about set-backs in early education that might have affected progress towards a satisfactory outcome from the school years. Most

people can, of course, point to some part of their school-life when the steady absorption of knowledge and acquisition of skills were interrupted adversely. The questionnaire suggested a number of ways in which, from statements made by fresh-start students during counselling interviews, they recognized points at which their early schooling had suffered or been truncated. A check-list was given of such hazards as childhood illness, the 11-plus selection process (a well-recognized point of non-return for the rejected, over the years when it was general), family removals, changes of school and within the schools as these were merged into comprehensives, for example. The congruence of experience in this among women attending part-time day courses in London and Richmond was notable, 59 per cent and 58 per cent respectively, making such claims. Particularly potent for both groups was the rejection for entry to secondary grammar schools, e.g.:

'I failed eleven plus: I had no pride in school or self. Everything was second-rate.'

'Failed eleven plus: the humiliation has never left me – my whole schooling I found humiliating.'

'I felt a failure and that I never could succeed.'

Family removals and consequent changes of schools, as well as changes within the school system itself, broke the continuity of early educational experience. The two groups were again remarkably congruent with 13 per cent and 16 per cent affected by removals and 11 per cent and 9 per cent by school change, e.g.

'I changed schools seven times between 6 and 12. I had to make new friends, become familiar with different teachers and teaching methods, all of which I feel had a shattering effect on my formative years. Although I was accepted by my peers in each school, I never felt one of them.'

'We moved approximately once a year and I had to change schools continually. I never managed to adjust before moving on again.'

'Six different schools by 11 years: two boarding schools at 5 and 8 years. Needless to say early grounding was either missing entirely or disrupted, especially in maths subjects.'

'Only part-time education for three years owing to teacher and accommodation shortage.'

Yet one student wrote:

'Although I attended ten different schools I do not think this has had an adverse effect.' (She had, indeed, seven 'O's and three 'A's at the end of it.)

In the earlier study,[1] a quarter of the adverse effects experienced were recorded as resulting from war and evacuation. It may be surprising, with the 1939-45 war now an historical event, its veterans looking ever more elderly on Armistice Day, that its effects can still be felt as a source of educational loss by today's early middle-aged: one in seven part-time women day students in the relevant age-groups made such claims. Students in the 1976 fresh-start intake who were in their late 30s were starting school in the mid-war years: those in their 40s (about one-third of all the students) had some of their compulsory schooling during the war. By the end of the period under survey (1982-3) this older group still included many whose primary education took place wholly within the war period, e.g.:

'I went half-time to school in a reception area.'

'I was aged 8 at the end of the war and was put in a class of 7- to 14-year-olds till a new class-room was built.'

'During the war I passed what was called the scholarship. I did not change to a different type of school, however, and left at 14.'

'Was removed from High School back to elementary school at 12½ due to evacuation – learnt nothing new at school after that time.'

Illness of students themselves and illness and death of parents made inroads into early educational experience, e.g.:

'I had an operation at 10 and never seemed to catch up properly. The F/S course split the chip on my shoulder about having wasted my school years and gave me confidence to have another go. It showed me the excitement to be got from discovering things and I feel ten years younger.' (This was written at the time she was completing a full-time degree course.)

'I had glandular fever – detrimental to 'O' level results.'

'A year in hospital.'

'Mother ill – went into foster-home.'

'Father died when I was 9: I truanted *ad lib*.'

Father's army service, business failure, emigration and return led to early leaving and poor qualifications for others. Family disruption and parents' separation, not then the feature of children's lives that it has become, was also quoted, e.g.:

'At 15 severe family disruption caused me to become severely depressed. At 18 I was admitted to a mental hospital.'

'My parents were divorced. I lived with my father who did not believe in educating girls – at least at university level. Besides, he didn't know what to do with a teenager.'

And the school's own self-image could affect those who didn't fit it, e.g.:

'My school (independent boarding) was geared for high achievers of which I was not one, with very little encouragement for those who did not shine. I was left with a feeling of inadequacy which has dogged my life.'

'Unless you were considered brilliant no pupil was encouraged to go beyond 'O' levels.'

These women had to wait until they were 30 to 40 years old to enjoy the intellectual excitement and achievement of higher education.

In spite of 11-plus trauma, one-third of the women on both the London and Richmond part-time day courses went to grammar schools: a similar proportion attended private day or boarding schools, to some extent a middle-class fall-back with the end of fee-paying entry to publicly provided secondary grammar schools. Secondary-moderns, various junior-technical or central schools and a small number in early comprehensives accounted for the schooling of the remaining third. Slightly more of the Richmond than of the London students attended private day schools but in all there was very little difference between the two groups. This suggests that they are representative of a substantial population of women who, though not the totally deprived educationally, in our country have a considerable claim on resources that were not available or thought appropriate to them as girls and who represent a pool of under-used ability. More of the Richmond women had some 'O' levels (53 per cent); far fewer (16 per cent) had one or two 'A's. Of the London group there were 38 per cent with 'O' levels and 21 per cent with 'A's. In both groups, up to one-third had no school-leaving qualifications at all.

Education and training after school

Half of the respondents from each group went from school into some form of full-time vocational training. This ranged from six months' shorthand and typing to nursing or medical auxiliary training, attendance at art, music, drama or ballet schools for one to three years. Often such specialized training was interrupted by marriage or followed by work that was difficult to sustain during the years of child-rearing and family absorption. Getting a start in the arts or as performers was difficult in itself: keeping it up more so. There were a few women through the years under review who had taken teacher training or started a

degree course but much the greater part of the full-time training undertaken was six to twelve months' preparation for secretarial work. This was in the burgeoning days of London's office expansion when the Underground and competing agencies were vigorously luring young women from school and after into a limited range of desk jobs. This proved a handy way of earning as a 'temp' later and some of the students under discussion had taken a TOPS course as the first step out of the home to enable them to do this. None of this was likely to give access to an executive chair and a fresh-start course was seen as a possible chance to escape the boredom of the typewriter.

Those who went straight from school into any form of clerical work or retail trade saw their chance in evening institute classes in typing. A very few recorded City and Guilds certificates related to their work. Self-directed learning continued: only 13 per cent of the London and 10 per cent of the Richmond students claimed no post-school courses of any kind. Many had attempted a GCE course at evening classes. Some, as mothers, had taken Play-Group Leader training, a very potent confidence booster for mothers who found they could tackle formal learning again, based on their own experience.

It is now widely admitted that employer-based training in this country is, in quantity and quality, far below that of our Common-Market neighbours and some Asian competitors. The evidence that these women, with only the guidance of their own observation, had attempted in the years since leaving school to add to the quality and range of their skills to the extent quoted, surely reflects once again the lamentable attitudes of those who had employed them. The questionnaire asked about employment-based training and day-release education. Training was only reported as short-time and for specific jobs: the minimal percentages who had experienced some immediate post-school day-release classes comprised a few respondents who had gone from school into public service or nationalized industry. But, as Eileen Byrne has pointed out, it is day-release for the men aged 19 to 21 that is the key 'that enables them to represent future budding young managers, sales distributors . . . surveyors, computer technologists, skilled supervisors high on job evaluation charts' while 'investment in young women, over 18, drops dramatically and proportionately more for the years 19-20 and thereafter'.[2]

All-in-all, post-school education and training is shown as a matter that the young women and their parents and employers are unaware of, or indifferent to their own loss in not making promotion opportunities available, even though those they are employing represent the better qualified or more able of school-leavers.

Employment

Of the jobs our respondents did between school and the impending first

baby, the range is restricted and the limits narrow. Six out of ten of them fell into jobs categorized by the Registrar-General as 'Skilled Non-Manual' – clerks, cashiers, typists, shop assistants: just about half as many, three out of ten, were classifiable as 'Intermediate' (e.g. nurses, teachers). Under 2 per cent were within the 'Professional' range. There are quirks about these categories when related to the jobs women actually do and the responsibilities they assume. They tend to reduce, even more than experience warrants, the number of categories into which women's work falls. Martin and Roberts[3] re-sorted Women's Occupational Groups into five classes and a total of eleven groups. Even so their national survey, carried out in 1980, still left 39 per cent of women working full-time within the clerical category. 'It is highly likely' they say, 'that the jobs in this category are, in fact, fairly heterogeneous' and that if they had had more information, they could have been further sub-divided. It was clear from the replies to our questionnaire that the term 'secretarial' covered many different role interpretations. In some cases it may have called for higher technical skills or a greater degree of responsibility within the organization. Apparently it was rarely negotiable in terms of an executive chair.

When we compare the Martin and Roberts reclassification with the questionnaire replies from the two largest groups – the part-time day students at the City Lit and Richmond – the picture shown in Table 3 emerges.

Table 3 *Proportions of women in socio-economic groups – Martin and Roberts survey c/f questionnaire respondents reporting full-time employment*

		Martin and Roberts		Questionnaire respondents	
		employed part-time	employed full-time	initial full-time employment London day	Richmond day
		%	%	%	%
I	Professional	1	1	2	-
II	Intermediate	12	24	27	30
IIIA	Skilled non-manual	32	45	57	60
IIIB	Skilled manual	6	8	4	4
IV	Semi-skilled	32	20	5	-
V	Unskilled	17	2	2	-
	None	-	-	2	6

Martin and Roberts compare their classification with that of Hunt[4] for 1965 and find it 'striking how little has changed though the most significant difference is in the decline of manual, relative to non-manual occupations among women' – a change that was well advanced in the London area when most of the women of our study were in their early working years.

Table 3 above shows clearly the degree to which women working part-time fall into lower positions in the occupational hierarchy. Martin and Roberts emphasize this, noting that 'overall, there are proportionately more part-time workers among manual than among non-manual occupations among the lower level occupations in each group'. But women working part-time may well have been in full-time employment at an earlier date: indeed it can now be regarded as almost the normal pattern.

To see how they had been affected, our respondents were asked 'After leaving school and up to the time you started the FH/FS course, what were your main jobs?' Replies came dated with varying degrees of precision but it was possible in a sufficient number of cases to detect the break at child-bearing and the resumption of work later, to estimate the length of maximum domesticity and to follow the succeeding job pattern of individuals. Break periods varied considerably from three to as many as twenty-one years: the return was almost wholly into part-time work, often intermittent and bearing witness to the generalized findings of Martin and Roberts. Examples of actual jobs recorded include the succession from clerk, cleaner, home-help to dinner lady, Civil Service, nursery helper, welfare assistant, post-office clerk, crossing patroller.

Very few women were working full-time when they embarked on their part-time day courses but 33 per cent of those in London and 23 per cent of those in Richmond were working part-time. Sheila Stoney and Margaret Reid in their survey of bridging courses for women[5] distinguished two different types – 'Return to study' and 'Return to work', with the latter concentrating on coping strategies for seeking and re-entering employment. The MSC's 'Wider opportunities for women' (WOW) courses fall within this pattern. Those working with fresh-start students have taken the view that, unless women can re-enter the employment market at a level that takes account of an improved educational basis, they stand little chance of overcoming disadvantages set by their first placing and their generally lower re-starting point. The gap has in fact tended to become greater with the enhanced entry demands for the kinds of jobs they might particularly want to seek. Teaching, social work, the arts, media jobs, nursing, have all been moving towards a graduate standard of intake whilst many clerical and service occupations, which they originally occupied, have been reduced in numbers and in standards of pay and prestige with the coming of the computer

and the word processor. A 'Return to study' course helps a woman to reach out to her suppressed potential at a new level.

Home and family

The questionnaire asked whether and how relations within the family, at work and with friends, were affected while taking a fresh-start course and what adjustments had to be made to cope with changes. Work associates were a small concern but over half the total respondents commented on changed relations within the family (London 61 per cent; Richmond 47 per cent). Social relations began to centre round new friendships made on the courses. Martin and Roberts[6] looked at the general attitudes of wives and husbands to women's home and work roles. They found that husbands were more likely than wives to think that 'A woman's place is in the home' (17 per cent to 11 per cent); that women cannot combine a career and child care (22 per cent to 12 per cent) and to think that 'A job is all right but what most women want is a home and children' (27 per cent to 19 per cent).

Husbands' attitudes to their wives' studying can be more fraught. As, in the main, primary wage-earners, husbands are almost always the more assertive partners. Wives who are studying tend to challenge statements and attitudes that they have accepted previously and to quote new authorities against them. 'Husband tetchy' wrote one respondent and from others:

'I learned not to talk too much about the course – he was not interested.'

'He didn't like books and papers everywhere.'

'More equal and able to argue coherently with husband.'

But some husbands could take it and many seem to have enjoyed a better relationship, e.g.:

'Supportive and entered in what I was doing – enjoyed having a happier wife.'

'He helped me at home and with children.'

'Found my conversation more interesting.'

And if you can't beat them:

'Husband started evening classes – first time ever – and still continues.'

Women with young children had more adjustments to make in order to attend the courses and this affected more of the Richmond than of the London women. The College's play-group helped but respondents record 'having to leave a sick child alone in the house'; 'arranging sitters'

and arranging for a child attending school part-time to stay for the whole day. Indeed, it was where there were caring responsibilities that the women felt most constrained, e.g.:

'Less supportive of distant parents.'

'Had to become more selfish.'

'Mother complained – I had less time for her.'

The woman at home becomes the centre of a web of obligations to husband, children, relatives whether near or distant, neighbours for reciprocal services with children and voluntary work in and around the school and the local community. Making a bid to re-establish some personal independence is best done on a trial basis so that the dependants can find new and independent stances. One woman wrote, 'My mother is much more helpful to me, now' – after the fresh-start course.

Children saw their mothers in a new light: 'Quite proud that I was studying'; 'As I gained confidence my family's respect for me increased'; 'Some strain – suddenly wife and mum was changing her role'; 'Felt guilty about the kids at times but probably met them for the first time that year because I was happier'; 'More to talk about'; 'More contact with my Poly student son'; 'They saw me as a person not a service agency'. But families could be more complacent because in many cases respondents had given up work or shortened their hours in order to do the course.

Housework itself was very amenable to adjustments: much of the sociological study about domestic ties and the toil and tedium of housework has tended to come from and about women in the early stages of family building when children are most demanding and experience is usually being hardly won.[7] Our respondents did not deny that managing a house and family, shopping and cooking were substantial tasks but they were sufficiently well-equipped and experienced to be able to let go of the less essential parts of the job. Housework can always expand to the time available for it: 'Learnt how to neglect it'; 'Speeded up'; 'Ignored it'; 'Became better organized'; 'More take-aways'; and 'The non-iron pile became bigger' – these were some of the comments. One respondent confessed to feeling guilty. 'It became a load conflict between study and having a clean enough environment to study in.'

Full-time students

From the first full-time Fresh Horizons course at the City Lit in 1973–4 the women have been younger than those attending the part-time day courses and these initial age-groups have changed very little with the years. Nearly half of those recruited were under 30; 40 per cent were

between 30 and 40 with a small number of older women completing the total numbers. More of the full-time women were single but even so two-thirds were married or had been.

Looking at the ages of students on entry to full-time Fresh Horizons courses in the years between 1976 and 1982 one recognizes them as the 5-year-olds starting school between 1948 and 1963. They were children of the years of the 'bulge', of teacher shortages, crowded schools and of successive selective and comprehensive policies. 15 per cent went to grammar schools, less than half the proportion of those attending part-time day courses: 42 per cent were at secondary-modern schools and 21 per cent at comprehensives. 16 per cent, very similar to the proportion among the part-time day women, went to private day-schools including those of religious orders, particularly students who spent their school-days in Ireland.

76 per cent had left school at or below today's minimum age of 16. The process of selection and grant-aid for the Fresh Horizons course, applying to these full-time students, ensured that few had been at school beyond 17. They do, however, indicate the increase in the numbers of children obtaining some school-leaving qualifications in more recent years. Nearly half could claim some 'O' levels and 13 per cent had some CSEs but over one-third left without any qualifying certificate. Some of these might have followed up their 'O' levels with sixth-form study and 'A' levels but this had not become as established a practice for girls as it became later.

Schooling upsets

In recounting their experience of school-days, only 16 per cent as against 34 per cent of the part-time day students claim to have been free from some kind of handicap, with 35 per cent referring to deleterious consequences of 11-plus selection:

> 'Failing the 11-plus meant failure to gain a level of educational achievement that would have enabled me to enter more lucrative, interesting and absorbing fields of employment. This is apart from the psychological effects of being labelled a failure at 11 years of age.'
>
> 'I was told that, although I had passed the 11-plus, there were only two places allocated to our school. Three of us passed: I came second but the third was a boy so got my place.'

One is struck by the haphazard process as it was conveyed to the 10-year-olds sitting in their classrooms and the parents trying to keep track of the process among the distractions of family life:

> 'There was no liaison between parents and teachers re 11-plus

placings. Our Rector (it was a Scottish school) did come into the classroom on two occasions to make sure that no one wanted to go into any of the other classes of the secondary department. I did but I thought it too pretentious. Also we were staying with my grandmother as my mother was in hospital for an operation. My father was angry later that I had settled for the lower class but I realized that my mother's operation had precedence at the time.'

And a mystery decision:

'At secondary-modern was given choice of 'O' levels or CSE. When it came to the exam time the whole of the year was entered only for CSE. I went to the Tech to take 'O' levels with no financial support from parents and passed four.'

Examination failure could also be reinforced by personal handicap:

'Failure in the 11-plus marked me as an over-all failure. A long stay in hospital for hip replacement at 11, convinced my teachers at Sec Mod that I was not worth any effort.'

Poverty, illness and death are all recorded as affecting early educational progress:

'Brought up by grandparents – limited funds.'

'Father ill, had to go out to work.'

'Death of mother – sent to boarding school at 5.'

But on a happier note, there could sometimes be a change for the better:

'When my family moved I changed school. I failed 11-plus and attended a secondary-modern school at which I did only moderately well. Later various schools merged to form a comprehensive – here I obtained far better results – four good CSEs and one 'O' level.'

Work and training

Within this group there had evidently been a greater push to leave school and get out to work with less family money for full-time post-school training than among the part-time day groups. Among the 29 per cent with some certificated qualifications were two State Registered Nurses and four with full-time secretarial college training. For the rest, typing skills had been sought in evening classes along with supplementary 'O' and 'A' level GCEs. The large demand for clerical workers in London in the 1960s and 1970s had ensured them junior posts as typists or telephonists on the basis of their undoubted innate intelligence and the literacy and office skills acquired in practice by their late teens. Fewer of them than of the part-time day students could be

placed in the Registrar-General's 'Intermediate' group of occupations. Two-thirds of them came within the catch-all classification of 'Skilled Non-Manual' but their actual employments were in a narrow range – 'office work', 'clerk-typist', 'bank' or 'insurance clerk'. Other jobs mentioned included shop assistant, dress machinist, waitress, nursery assistant.

Less than one-third had any work-related training, either on the job or in day-release classes. A cook had attended catering courses; a machinist had a bit of both; two nursery assistants had a full year's one-day-a-week release. But the great majority – seven out of ten – recorded no training beyond what they had found for themselves in evening classes. Their personal search for office skills on leaving school, very evident in this group, had at least acted as an introduction to the full range of adult classes on offer in colleges of further education and evening institutes, to which more than half had had resort in classes for physical education, crafts, languages, etc., amounting in some cases to a steady annual commitment.

Family and other changes

Two-thirds of these full-time student respondents gave up work to make the larger investment of time in the expanded educational venture represented by the full-time Fresh Horizons course. As they were characteristically younger than the part-time day students, and more of them were single, they had fewer family responsibilities and more time ahead of them in which to take advantage of a rare opportunity to follow a course that had not been open to them in their school-days. Nevertheless, fifteen of them had children, including seven with children under 5, and seven were 'single parents'. Within the limited range of their earlier employments, these women with children had experienced breaks of up to ten years between the birth of a child and re-entering (mainly) part-time work. But changes in personal and family circumstances provided a goad to action and education set the direction. Twelve of thirty-eight students were involved in household removals; ten record divorce or separation from a husband or partner and five link their studies with a bereavement:

> 'Separation and moving house marked a major change in my life and left me feeling a gap and lack of purpose. The death of my father intensified this feeling.'

> 'As a result of my husband's death I was financially in a position to fulfil a long-term ambition to attend full-time education.'

Commitment to a full-time course could be stressful to relationships in the home. Some claimed that they had improved but more found them more difficult: 'More to talk about'; 'nicer to the children because

happier' and 'husband took on a lot of household chores' were positive gains but students met criticism from their parents: 'The family thought it was silly to give up a good job'; 'My mother ignored it and pretended to forget I was at college'. There was 'resentment of partner'; 'disagreement with husband' and conflict over housework. Another one noted: 'Relationship with my boy friend suffered due to tiredness and irritability on my part'.

Social contacts changed: they became course-related and much mutual comfort and pleasure derived from them was mentioned. But old friends could be brought in to help with chores and children: 'paid a friend to help with housework' and 'arranged child care with a friend' were two comments.

Evening students

The women on the two-evenings-a-week course at the City Lit were drawn almost entirely from the working population of commercial and administrative London. Thirty-nine of them completed questionnaires. More than among the day-time students, they were, at the time of their enrolment, working women, with four-fifths of them in employment, mainly full-time. Only just over a quarter were currently married but six were divorced or separated and one was widowed; twenty described themselves as single. This marital pattern and the fact that they were younger than their counterparts in part-time day classes accounts for their less onerous child-care responsibilities: even so seven had children up to teen-age and two had children under 5, but only one-third claimed to have household responsibilities while working.

Although younger on balance as noted, they were more evenly distributed over the age-groups from 25 to 50 than the women attending day-time classes whether full or part-time. One-third of them were between 30 and 39 and similar proportions were below and above those ages. They are, therefore, a small but fair representation of a response by working women to the offer of a chance to explore their capacities not given to them by their normal working life. It is perhaps not surprising that, by the end of the courses, twenty-three out of thirty-nine had decided to seek the way out to a more satisfying working and personal life by acquiring higher educational qualifications.

In their school-days, they had been less affected by adverse 11-plus decisions than were the full-time students but two-thirds reported some event that they felt had put a brake on their progress in the vital years in which the pattern of people's futures is determined with little chance of modification. Education abroad, divorce of parents and conditions within schools were quoted as having made early-leaving decisions: 'Most unruly class in fourth year: consequently I stayed away as much

as possible'; 'I was sent to second-year class at senior school from two years in last class of juniors because of birth-date'.

Their secondary schooling had been related to an early entry to the labour market. Three-quarters had left school by age 16, nearly half by 15. More than one-third had no school-leaving qualifications and the most common achievement was a few 'O' levels. After school, eleven went to full-time commercial courses and six to similar part-time courses. Among other post-school certificate courses mentioned were nursery nursing, Montessori, textile design (part only) and a part-time drama course. A few had acquired one or two 'O' and 'A' levels at evening institute classes. Fourteen students had not even encountered the usual range of non-certificate adult courses – languages, keep-fit etc. – their working life and commuting to and from work being no doubt a sufficient demand on their time and physical resources. Employer training was again minimal, 70 per cent having none at all and what had been experienced was in general slight. An oil company had provided six months' day-release (one-day-a-week) and training for new work; the public services had made some provision, and one woman, who had levered herself into an editorial chair, had been sent on a week's course. Most of these women had been working continuously since leaving school, but the older married women among them recorded substantial breaks before their return to work. A bank clerk had a fourteen-year break from 1959 to 1974 and had worked continuously since then. A civil servant until 1955 had a break of 10 years before returning to a job in commerce.

A woman of 22, now working in the Probation Service, spoke for many on the evening course when she wrote: 'Until I went to Fresh Horizons I thought I would remain a secretary until I married. Fresh Horizons showed me I could completely change my life. I knew I wanted to return to some sort of education no matter what the cost financial or personal, which I did.' The group of which she was a member illustrates again how the responsibility for post-school education and training lies almost wholly with parents and the girls themselves. Few employers were shown as having attempted to identify and give promotional training to women who showed themselves able to obtain substantial higher educational qualifications and make new careers for themselves outside the world of industry and commerce.

In looking at women who were students on evening Fresh Horizons courses between 1966 and 1974 we commented that 'they had to get out to get on'. Nearly twenty years on, it remains a fair comment.

Personal problems

Adjustments in personal life experienced by this group in order to undertake the course centred on difficulties with working commitments.

The evening course started at 6.30 pm provoking comments of the following kind: 'Had to leave office on time – not always easy'; Left office early – made up on other days'; 'Relationship with boss worsened'; 'Resentment from boss that I wouldn't work on indefinitely *every* evening'. Nor were husbands always amenable: 'Good for me to get out of the house. Reluctant husband or baby-sitter had to look after the children'; 'Husband not too pleased – didn't eat as well as usual'. New vistas opened up by the course could affect other personal relationships: 'Separated during course as new world opened up which affected relationship with partner of two years'; 'Socially more self-confident with highly qualified associates'.

Here again there were family and personal circumstances that had made them reconsider the pattern and purposes of their lives. A course with an evocative title like 'Fresh Horizons' can seem the answer in such circumstances. Only two gave a child starting school as the trigger-point: divorce or a break in a relationship were quoted by five, with six consequent or other house moves. Unemployment gave a chance to one woman: 'I became unemployed which left me more time to study and enjoy the course.' Similarly the end of a relationship could work both ways: 'A relationship ending freed me for exploration', but on the contrary, after a divorce, another wrote: 'I didn't know what to do with my life.'

Three people mentioned a bereavement and with this could come a late freedom to explore: 'Death of an elderly parent left me opportunity to consider "my" needs and investigate ways to expand.'

Appropriate access

The responses of these different groups of women to the offer of fresh-start education illustrate the need for the providers to identify different points of access for differently placed women. In Richmond, one of the part-time day courses was easily transferred when a new day-centre was launched in Twickenham, tapping a potential demand there. The difficulties seen by some commuters in attending an evening course led to an experimental one on Saturdays. After some teething troubles it was firmly established and has continued to thrive. And, even so, despite work and travel problems, it was also found possible to start an evening course in another part of the borough where an evening centre was being developed.

3
Motives, intentions and outcomes

The personal and social circumstances of women's lives, as recorded by fresh-start students and reviewed in the previous chapter, are obviously closely linked to the motives and intentions that induced them to enrol and to the outcomes they envisaged and in fact achieved. In the questionnaire, students were asked: 'When you joined the course, did you (in the main) wish to *either* (a) Prepare for further education/training or for new/different work? *or* (b) Extend understanding/personal development more generally?

There were possible common elements of motive in these suggested alternatives and some respondents, justifiably, ticked both but the majority were able to disentangle their main aims in joining the course in the first place.

Part-time by day

More than half of the London part-time day students were intending to make the change implied in (a) at the outset of their Fresh Horizons courses and more of those who had originally thought in terms of (b) changed during the course and sought outcomes in (a). The Richmond students changed equally in both directions. Almost half of them joined with an intention of making the new venture implied in (a) but no failure was imputed and no face was lost if, in the light of experience, they finally decided against it or deferred immediate action, as a number of them did. Others who had originally joined for reasons implied in (b), after taking stock of themselves and their circumstances, entered higher education or training or returned to their original work.

Of the forty-five women from Richmond who entered full- and part-

time degree courses, only twenty-one had started the Fresh Start course with such declared intentions. Thirty-eight of the sixty-six London part-time day students who went on to higher education joined their Fresh Horizons course intending to do so. The questionnaire left space for a substantial extension of replies and many respondents analyzed their original intentions and, particularly, changes in them, e.g.:

'I am simply following through my original plans.'

'I used the course as preparation for going to university but it has made me appreciate and value adult education for its own sake.'

'I had always wanted a university education but thought it unrealizable.'

'I didn't know it was possible. Having been an academic failure it was a wonderful chance.'

'I found myself enjoying writing essays. I had quite a battle with myself and was not wholly convinced when the tutors told me I was good enough to embark on a degree, so really my mind was made up for me.'

'I had no intention of continuing into higher education because of fear of exams but after Fresh Start found myself with a remarkable confidence in my ability to cope with a full-time course.'

'Initially I wished only to do something worthwhile out of the home and meet other people. But I enjoyed the mental stimulation and decided to update my (nursing) qualifications.'

But also the other way:

'I realized the children were too young for me to do a degree.'

In the event more than two-thirds of the London women and nearly a third of the Richmond ones, went on to degree studies. These and other outcomes in study and work are discussed in the next chapter.

The quest for new occupations outside the home was, however, only part of the motivation that brought women on to the courses. Much of what happens within the domestic dwelling is repetitive and humdrum. If the same can also be said of the office and workshop, they have at least tangible economic value at the week or month end and the challenge of adult contacts. Many students commented how the daily fare of home life restricted their intellectual and social range. 'My confidence in my abilities', wrote one, 'was lacking. I felt I was capable of nothing else but child-rearing. I did not feel confident to return to hairdressing in a salon because the thought of talking to clients frightened me.'

Some felt themselves out-paced by the upwardly mobile society in which they lived and needed reassurance of their capacities to hold their own in discussion and to prove that they could think for themselves.

As already noted, motives and intentions when joining fresh-start courses reflected the personal circumstances of the 'family' women who predominated on the part-time day courses. Their lives were circumscribed by responsibilities to others in a high degree. The nature of the courses deliberately left a large component of experiment in the venture. In many instances the immediate stimulus came from a family or personal event triggering them into action. As many as 14 per cent in these two groups were involved in housing changes just before or during the course, representing some reshaping of their lives. In many cases, but not all, this was linked with divorce which also affected 14 per cent: for some it was there as a lurking intent, the trying out of a move towards independence before taking a final step, and part of a social change we have not caught up with.

The partial release from home care as the 5-year-old started school was relevant for 16 per cent of the Richmond women and for 14 per cent of the London ones who claimed, e.g.:

> 'Child starting school gave more time for reading.'
>
> 'Move back from living in France and children all at school pushed me to think of the direction of my own life.'
>
> 'I had spent seven years as a full-time mum and loved it but I knew by the time I had two children in school I would like to revive an early ambition to get more learning.'
>
> 'My husband's death left me devastated: there was no purpose in life.'
>
> 'After living abroad I returned with the children (6 and 8). I found myself living in a strange neighbourhood . . . I needed to make social contacts in addition to using my time constructively.'

The fresh-start courses also allowed for seeing what effects a substantial engagement in study had on husbands, children, the running of the home and on other family and social obligations. The two-day London course (eight and a half hours' attendance) and the one-day-a-week course at Richmond (four and a half hours' attendance) were more demanding on time than most adult education classes. At home, reading and regular written work over a range of subjects and research and writing-up for the end-of-course essay or project had to be fitted in.

Full-time students

It was to be expected that more of the students on the London full-time course would be using it for access to higher education: there was ample evidence from the first students attending it that it could be so used. Yet only twenty of the thirty-eight respondents recorded their

original motives as improvement of their education or work qualifications rather than general personal development. Though all had been through a selection process on which a grant as well as a place depended, it seems clear that there was no pressure on them to claim specific career intentions at the outset: the educational process was to operate irrespective of declared intent. In fact thirty-one moved to formal courses of higher education, all but two of them at degree level. For those for whom this had been the primary intention, the course 'clarified ideas about what to study'; 'gave confidence to enter full-time higher education'; 'gave increased ability to organize, make links between things'. One single woman wrote: 'I wanted a more responsible job but feel I did develop as a person.'

Of the sixteen who claimed to have started out with the main aim of 'personal development', it was the experience and confidence generated by the course itself that led a big majority of them to go forward to higher education: 'I realized how much I had missed by not having the opportunity to develop my academic abilities.' A 15-year-old school-leaver who had failed the 11-plus wrote: 'As the course proceeded I became inspired to continue studying' and another said: 'The course revolutionized my life.' One respondent, a single woman in her early 30s who left school in Ireland at 16 and was working as an audio-typist, described the decision-making process and the change-over of her intent thus:

> 'Initially I intended to use the course as a year's break from work, giving me an opportunity to use my brain after feeling under-educated for a long time. The idea of going on to do a degree course (which she did) would have struck me as ridiculous mainly because I would not have felt capable and also would not have been eager to be worse off financially. As the course advanced it seemed natural to be discussing with the other students the options for further study. Fresh Horizons whetted my appetite for more knowledge while laying the foundations for a degree course. I became poorer but life became more interesting.'

Eight students started with the intent to seek higher education but in the event decided against it. One was ambivalent – while praising the course tutor's concern and empathy, she wrote: 'I see educated people as those who have a permanent barrier to human relationships. I like myself as I am.' One thought herself too old but has since taken two 'A' levels. For another the decision was a financial one: she still felt the same about her original intention and was using the Fresh Horizons course as a main reference for jobs as she had married and was helping to buy a first home. Two others quoted financial reasons and one a legal dispute relating to a divorce, as causes of their changes of intent.

Evening students

Exploring their motives and changes of intentions while on the course, of the thirty-nine evening women twenty-two had been clear at the outset that they wanted to make a major change into higher education or job training. In the outcome, seven decided otherwise, as did six who claimed both higher education and 'personal development' as equally important notices for embarking on the Fresh Horizons course. The reasons they give for their decisions demonstrate the importance of leaving an open ending to this type of course: 'Children (1 and 5) too young' – but she had made a start and was doing a subsequent 'A' level. 'Realised that daughter of 13 could not be asked to live on a grant'; 'As the economy worsened, I decided to hang on to present job'; 'I enjoy my job as a nursery-nurse' – but she is taking child psychology courses at the Tavistock Institute. 'I gained confidence to extend my horizons in work and play'; 'I felt less threatened by people with degrees'.

On the other hand, twelve who had started the course with no fixed motives about change did in fact apply to take degree courses. Two found out, only while on the course, that it was possible both to be considered for a degree course and to get a grant while doing it. Several gained the necessary academic confidence or found they enjoyed studying and wanted to do more. Several whose intentions were more knowledgeably informed changed not their intentions in principle, but the actual area of degree study they decided to undertake. There were clear expressions of gratitude for the help and encouragement given by course tutors, e.g.:

> 'I will be eternally grateful for advice on opportunities. Cannot praise tutors too highly.'
>
> 'I can honestly say they were the best teachers I've had, including at university, because they are so interested in their subjects and what they are doing for ordinary non-academic people.'

Discovery and decision-making

Discussions in class, with each other over coffee and with tutors in counselling sessions, are all part of the process by which fresh-start students review their intentions and make decisions about what to do when the course is over. The statements already quoted reveal how motives with which people entered courses were confirmed or changed as they progressed. But the process is one that can only be based on information in the first place: sources of information on prospects for work, careers, training and higher education have been extended and much more is available in published form than at the time of our

earlier study. But, even if available, information has to be sifted and checked in relation to local conditions and personal circumstances and it is for this that students turn to the course tutor in the first place. They may then explore further on their own account but they will turn again to the tutor for guidance, counselling and help in making contacts and supporting them with assessments and recommendations. Unfortunately, tutors may have all too little time allowed them to amass and sort out such information, to keep up to date and to make and keep contacts with other institutions.

Time during class meetings has to be closely scheduled: the total hours allotted to the course as a whole put a limit on the time available during the first term for essential items of information to be conveyed and discussed as a basis for mulling over possibilities as the course continues. Admissions tutors of near-by institutions of higher education, the grants administrator of the local education authority and representatives from different occupations and professions are valuable as visiting informants and time has to be found for them. Perhaps most useful of all are sessions with former students when current ones can discuss coping strategies and the way it all actually works out in practice. In a one-day-a-week course, probably not more than three one-and-a-half hour periods of class time can be spared for these essential purposes with rather more in two-day-a-week and full-time courses.

Counselling

Individual counselling appointments allow for the heart-searchings when information, impressions and personal misgivings as to abilities and competence in relation to them can be talked over. Finding time for this requires ingenuity: on the Richmond courses, the tutor aims to achieve one such encounter a term for each student but time has to be found in the lunch period or at the end of the course day. It is time shared with the demands of administrative detail, the writing of letters and making of outside appointments for students and because all this is outside the usual pattern of class provision, even the limited time available has to be guarded from erosion as costs and charges mount, threatening the course budget. An appointments list for the term on which students may fix a suitable date and time has proved a useful device. It keeps over-demanding students from monopolizing scarce tutorial and counselling time, reminds the shy ones of their rights and keeps the tutor more in tune with the needs of the whole group.

For Richmond Saturday students, also, only ingenuity and the generosity of tutors with their own time has on occasion made possible this larger and vital dimension of fresh-start education. By contrast, the London part-time day students have six tutor hours per week allowed for counselling. With two parallel courses, each with approximately

fifteen students, there is a possibility of half-an-hour's counselling four times a term for each student and approximately the same for the evening students. The full-time students probably fare even better. Apart from specific counselling, group tutorials allow for closer tutor/student contact on all courses, a practice that has developed during the years covered by this study.

The full-time students in London have altogether more space within an ampler programme to sort out their intentions but it is, from the evidence of their questionnaires, no less fraught with anxiety. Indeed it is possibly more worrying for them: they may have given up work for a year and set themselves apart from their contemporaries by becoming full-time students, an action that many of their relatives and workmates have found incomprehensible, and there is a need to justify their actions by results.

For all the students there is the additional tension created by the general requirement of early application for follow-on courses whether vocational or academic. A number of the respondents commented that UCCA forms had to be completed and a range of decisions taken as to what to apply for and where, before they had a proper notion of what might be possible for them personally. With the advent of a CNAA Clearing House arrangement, the more informal late approaches that were possible in that sector may also give way to the frenzied decision-making imposed by earlier closing dates. Once more it is a procedure appropriate, perhaps, to the long-term planning school and college programmes but not to the individual adult returner coming in from the cold.

With decision-making imposed on them so early in the course, students infect each other with their doubts and worries and evidence of stress begins to mount. Tutors need to deploy all their counselling skills in encouraging the doubtful and in advising and calming the hopeful. The questionnaire asked specifically about students' experience of counselling on their courses – 'Advice on further opportunities and personal counselling are built in to the course. Did you personally find this Unnecessary, Unimportant, Useful, Very Helpful' – with opportunity for further comment if desired. It is noticeable that the Richmond students, with a higher proportion of intense family commitments and a one-day course, were somewhat more detached in their opinions than the London ones. More said counselling was 'unimportant' (sometimes adding 'to me'); 44 per cent found it 'useful' and 36 per cent 'very helpful' as against 21 per cent and 69 per cent, respectively, of London part-time day students. Responses from London evening students were similar and there were even higher proportions of approving replies from the full-time students, none of whom recorded less than useful.

There is, however, a question of 'supply' as well as of 'demand'. In the period under review, London had two and, ultimately, three full-time teaching staff available for counselling, each of them responsible for a group of students attending well-established courses. At Richmond one part-time course tutor had to cope with a build-up of courses beginning only in 1976. Now with up to a hundred students on five part-time courses and indications that more of them are looking for an outcome in higher education, it is obvious that this allocation of responsible staff is unlikely to meet the implicit scale of demand for counselling help.

Some student reflections

How students fared in the search for academic experience, the successes they gained and the pitfalls they encountered, are described later as are the alternative routes that others took in training or employment. While it is possible to quantify, to some extent academic gains and career achievements, the fresh-start experience in itself is as variable and varied as the individuals who partake of it, as some of the responses to opportunities provided for general assessment and free comment may illustrate. They come from answers to two final items on the questionnaire, viz.: 'Have you anything to add about subsequent effects of attending the Fresh Horizons/Fresh Start course as far as concerns home, family, work and social life?' – and 'Are you aware of changes (apart from those already recorded) in yourself and your range of interests, since taking the course?'

For those who went on to full-time study, the effects recorded tended to be combined with the whole new learning experience. They found it difficult to isolate the impact of the fresh-start course from that of other consequential learning experiences. 'Had to sort out which changes were Fresh Horizons and which came with further study', wrote one. There were some positive improvements in family relationships:

> 'Happier at home because so much to occupy my time.'
>
> 'Good effect on my son's studies. My finals were in the week before his exams. He did well in his 'O' levels. We have been much more sympathetic to each other.'
>
> 'More tolerant of my family and social life improved.'
>
> 'Since the course relationships have been restored rather than broken. My partner is very bright academically: I now have a piece of paper to prove I am intelligent. As a direct result my sister went to university.'

'I discovered there was more to life than bringing up children and that there is more to me than any one I know could possibly imagine.'

Increased confidence in tackling new problems and new work is also mentioned:

'I tend to stick at things now and try to resolve problems I would have given up previously.'

'When I don't know what to do I use the technique of analysis to take me a step further.'

'I am ready to tackle totally new subject matter.'

'I gained the confidence to expose my lack of knowledge of a subject. Previously I would have felt unintelligent and inadequate.'

Others who registered comments included a respondent who left school at 14 with no school-leaving qualifications. Subsequent to Fresh Start she obtained two 'O' and one 'A' levels at Richmond Adult College and worked as a doctor's receptionist: she had three children aged 16, 12 and 9. Her husband and family were pleased with her achievements 'but still expected the same service'. The social studies element in the Fresh Start course, in particular, had latched in with her daughter's 'A' level studies: 'I was doing homework and so were they.'

A qualified Health Visitor with children aged 3 and 5 wrote:

'Since the course I have spent a great deal of time considering the possibilities of full- or part-time employment. I am really enjoying the seminar class which I would not have attempted but for Fresh Start and am learning to play the piano. I have just applied to do Marriage Guidance Counselling which I feel will train me for a job that should extend my Health Visitor skills.'

For a 36-year-old part-time teacher of flower arrangement:

'Attending the Fresh Start course has given me the confidence to pursue a career in Art and Design. I am at present working towards a foundation course portfolio. Before taking Fresh Start I would not have felt myself able to take a degree course or been willing to spend so long studying.'

An example of long-term planning is provided by the woman aged 26 with children of 2 and 5 when she joined the Fresh Start course:

'I joined feeling a little inferior but realized I could hold my own. It set new horizons for me. I'm still experimenting and have a thirst for knowledge. I may decide to have another child before embarking on a full-time career.' (After the Fresh Start course she obtained two 'O' and 'A' levels: she was an 11-plus reject from a neighbouring area where the local education authority stoutly maintains selection.)

A middle-aged respondent has this to say:

> 'I feel that most people who embark on a Fresh Start course are in some way dissatisfied either with their educational record or perhaps their life-style. To this end I involved myself in adult education, culminating in the Fresh Start course and during that time gradually came to a very pessimistic conclusion that a degree gained in middle age was not going to make up for shortcomings that had social rather than educational roots. What Fresh Start did for me was to allow me to take a much more relaxed attitude to the gaps in my education. I look forward to joining more courses in the future. Many thanks to all concerned.'

Many students commented on the wider range of interests they had developed:

> 'Reading better books, being able to choose, more confident in discussion.'
>
> 'Brought me out of the mist into the clear.'

And this from the wardrobe of the Royal Opera House:

> 'One of my work-mates found my theorizing during difficult moments at dress rehearsals slightly exhausting. Who needs a heavy argument about the theories of Rousseau when Kiri Te Kanawa's bodice doesn't fit?'

A woman of 48 who left school at 15, learnt dressmaking and 'had to work night and day in the rag trade which ruined my eyes and health', wrote:

> 'Although I regret very much not pursuing further courses, I am very pleased to say that the Fresh Horizons course has made me see things from different points. I don't just sit and have to be a "Yes" person – you can't wait for the next day's class. My family, when I go home, can't believe it. They just sit there watching me, many times cheering me on.'

Others commented that they had experienced a feeling of release and a new sense of direction:

> 'It acted as a catalyst and consciousness-raising exercise for me: it helped to change my life.'
>
> 'Attending the course was like having doors and windows open. It's impossible to go back having breathed the fresh air.'

But the change could bring its own regrets:

> 'Nothing is black or white any more. Every question poses another

question. What I do not like and find hard to come to terms with is that I have grown away from my relatives and cousins I was once very close to. My feelings have not changed to them but I find we do not have the same things in common as we did.'

A good deal is said about work prospects:

'In my case I ended back where I started – unemployed – but now with a qualification. But that is not the fault of the course. I wish I could do it all over again.'

'I'm less inclined to take up low paid work without prospects.'

'Fresh Horizons represented a new outlook on life for me: without it I would be a secretary feeling bored and aimless.'

One student, a woman of 31, with no school-leaving qualifications, summed up much of the background to the evening course she attended:

'I felt the course was very important to me for a number of different reasons. I left school at 15 because my parents wanted me to work. I was happy to do that because I was bored and eager to get out. I have regretted that for many years and believed I was too stupid to get another chance. On Fresh Horizons I found myself among people like myself eager to learn but without the technique of modern learning and lacking in self-confidence. I was extremely lucky and privileged to have this opportunity. We all discovered that we were capable of intelligent thought and I believe we made a creative group.'

For a number there was a 'born again' quality to the experience:

'It may be a cliché but Fresh Start changed my life.'

'I feel I was "born" at the City Lit and it changed the course of my life.'

4
Moving on

In the last chapter we explored the ways in which those who completed the questionnaires came to a decision to go further with academic study. We also know something about the end-of-course intentions of those from whom we did not have returns. For each course, the tutor-in-charge of the London courses has, through the years, prepared a summary profile of students incorporating basic information about age, occupation, school-leaving age, qualifications and post-course intentions. This has been a very useful and necessary precaution since students from many years ago may at any time come seeking references for work or further education.

London students and higher education

The comparison made in the statistical appendix (Table A3) between respondents and non-respondents shows that, on the evidence available, there was little difference in their reported intentions as to entry into higher education. Table 4 (p. 51) summarizes the extent to which degree studies were completed by 1984. For the non-respondents, progress on degree courses comes from reports made by former students to their Fresh Horizons tutors and may not represent all who went on to such courses.

In addition to the twenty-four part-time day course respondents reporting completion of their degree courses, seven who began them, left them or postponed completion for (mainly) personal reasons. We do not know how many non-respondents may have done the same. The figures for evening students certainly understate the true position. With not much to go on, so many courses not yet being finished, we hazard

Table 4 *Degree study intentions of women Fresh Horizons students and the numbers of them completing degree courses, so far as known, by 1984*

1 Women students	Full-time	Part-time day	Evening
1.1 Respondents	38	94	39
1.2 Non-respondents	32	109	63
Totals	70	203	102
2 Proceeding to degree-level courses			
2.1 Respondents reporting starts, 1977–83	29 (76%)	66 (70%)	23 (59%)
2.2 Non-respondents – reported as intention	26 (81%)	62 (57%)	27 (43%)
3 Numbers (as known) completing degree courses by 1983–4			
3.1 Respondents	13	24	12
3.2 Non-respondents	9	20	3
Totals	22	44	15

it as a reasonable guess that not less than three-quarters of those embarking on degree-level courses will complete them.

Part-time day students

Looking in more detail at the figures in Table 4 it will be seen that, of the ninety-four women students from the part-time day courses who completed questionnaires, sixty-six embarked on degree courses, thirteen of them part-time, including four who registered with the Open University. Not all necessarily started such a course immediately following the Fresh Horizons year and varying dates of possible completion make it difficult to relate the number known to have qualified to the possible total number entering higher education but we can account for thirty-one respondents in this group who had completed or left degree courses by 1984. In addition, as indicated in Table 4, we know the results of twenty non-respondents over the same time-span who had reported them to the Fresh Horizons tutors.

The actual degree results, so far as known, are summarized in Table 5. Two women obtained 1st Class Honours and twenty-three had Class

2.1s – more than half of those for whom we have information: only four had less than 2.2s – a very satisfying outcome.

The stories of three of these London part-time-day students, as they emerge from their questionnaire replies, give a picture of the sort of women they were, their lives, the problems they met and how they met them, in their bids for education and new roles.

From the class of 1976

Leaving grammar school at 16 with 5 'O' levels, she was evidently aiming for a science qualification when she went to a polytechnic to study for 'A' levels in maths, pure and applied, and physics. She finished the course but failed the examination because, she now thinks, of her immaturity. Nevertheless, she first became a computer operator, then a programmer for which work she had a month's in-service training. Six years on she was married and the mother of twins. When they were 2 years old she apparently restarted work part-time, first as a free-lance programmer and then as a program analyst. This was evidently not entirely satisfying since she writes:

> 'My initial reason for starting the Fresh Horizons course was almost a joke and incidentally to find new work. During the course I gained a great deal of self-confidence thanks to Phoebe, Jan and Carol, and therefore began to take myself seriously, realizing that it was possible for me to succeed academically. This spurred me on to apply myself in a very different field from that which I had envisaged at the beginning of the course.'

The different field was a modular degree in French and computer studies from which she emerged with an Upper-Second-Class BSc. In postgraduate teacher training, she concentrated on French but entered full-time teaching in computer studies at a secondary school where she was working when she answered the questionnaire.

She describes how all this was received by her family: 'Husband was very supportive of what I was doing, children quizzical. Cleaning was done less often' but otherwise she led a 'full-time family life with husband, two children and a busy social life including duties as secretary of a Parents' Association and assisting husband, a dentist, with his clerical work, mainly accounts'. She adds: 'I cannot speak highly enough of the effect that Fresh Horizons has had on me and my life. This, in turn, reflects on my family and has allowed me to take up work that I enjoy' – she was, by this time, in her mid-40s.

But there is the residual niggling worry, typical of the family woman: 'My only reservation is that, at a time when my children should have had my maximum attention, I was busy studying for a degree.' Unlike a number of other mature students who were studying alongside their

teenage children, she says: 'I'm not sure whether this was a good example for them or allowed them to get away with less work than they should have been doing.'

From the class of 1977

This student had a harder passage and a different and rather sad ending. She started school during the war years and speaks of the effects of evacuation and post-war shortage of school accommodation when all ages from 7 to 14 were taught in one class of over forty which she found 'emotionally and intellectually devastating'. After a major school inspection in 1946, when she was 9, the lower and upper ranges were removed from the class but it continued as a two-year age-band until an additional classroom was built to accommodate the extra year of schooling. 'The syllabus was well below the same age-range in the rest of the school.'

Not surprisingly she failed the 11-plus and left school at 15 without a leaving qualification, none being taken at the school, a usual restriction at that time in secondary-modern schools. Until she was 27 she worked mainly as a telephonist and clerk with day-release for education while she was with the GPO where she had her training. When she started the Fresh Horizons course, aged 40, there were four teenage children and a 6-year-old in the family. Her husband, a civil servant, had been forced to retire as a sufferer from Parkinson's disease. But her main aim, in joining the course, was to extend her personal development:

> 'I always felt I had been cheated out of a proper education for social reasons rather than because I had failed and I had an overwhelming belief in my ability but very little confidence or experience of how I could convert my convictions into achieving anything. When I started Fresh Horizons, therefore, I regarded it as an avenue where I could examine the options and test out my belief without the pressure of exams and within a framework of support and an objective assessment of my capabilities. By the end of the course what was at the beginning merely a half-expressed hope had become a certainty to move on to higher education.'

In 1982 she obtained a Lower Second in English and started on a post-graduate certificate of education. This she was unable to complete: after 'flu and a chest infection she says, 'I was unable to cope with domestic and college work without the financial resources to employ help and had to give up.' She continues: 'Although my family helped, the main burden of domestic duties was still left to me, my husband being incapacitated and unable to help. The Social Services department were unwilling to help whilst there were other able-bodied

members in the household. The assistance of a home-help, once a week, would have enabled me to complete the PGCE course.'

At the time of writing she had no further intention in view. The benefits she says she acquired were the ability to discuss with her student son the subjects he is studying, that the family realize that she can combine family responsibilities with a commitment outside the home and that her youngest son no longer thinks, as was reported to her, 'Mum was not very bright because she didn't do anything except look after the family.' But her main satisfaction is in having laid the ghost of early educational loss. As she says: 'The ability to change and develop, whilst still retaining values and keeping a relationship intact, has been another achievement that was unexpected.'

From the class of 1979

This student described how she made her way through to a First Class degree. 'I got 5 'O's at school after various attempts, failed 2 'A' levels and was a secretary for nine years. When my son was 6 and a little more independent, it left me with lots of free time. I had a year off from the BSc course to have a baby and emerged with a First. I am still studying for a higher degree.' Fresh Horizons was:

> 'The first step from domestic isolation back into the world and confrontation with what I had seen as academic failure. I had disappointed my parents as a teenager – all my family had academic degrees and it was frowned on to be an academic failure. The first step was Fresh Horizons' supportive and committed attitude. Home, family, work and social life all feel different now I have a life outside the home.'

Evening students

As Table 4 shows women on the evening courses were somewhat less willing to commit themselves initially to full-time study than were the women on the full-time or day courses. Of those who did so, although it was not their original intention, several mention that, before taking the Fresh Horizons course, they were not aware that mature entry to higher education was even possible. Some found they liked studying and wanted to go more deeply into the subjects they were enjoying. For others the self-confidence engendered by the course and the encouragement of the tutors provided the stimulus that took them beyond their original intentions into making a major change in a new direction.

Of the twelve respondents qualifying in higher education (Table 4), only one had any 'A' levels. Two of the eight obtaining Upper-Second-

Class degrees had left school at 15 or under with no leaving qualifications and two had left at 16 with fewer than four 'O' levels: nine out of the twelve left school at or below today's minimum leaving age. One example may illuminate these figures.

From the class of 1977

She records attendance at many different primary schools as 'Father was a soldier so we moved a lot'. Her secondary education was at a comprehensive school which she left with no leaving qualifications, not having entered for any. Work in an office gave her a relatively rare opportunity of day-release study for shorthand and typing qualifications and an 'O' level in English. Until starting the Fresh Horizons course she had not attended any spare-time classes since for six years she also did evening bar work. The impact of the Fresh Horizons course led to a break-up with her partner of which she says 'though saddened by this it made my life much easier as I then had more time to do what I wanted'. She continues, 'Until I went to Fresh Horizons I thought that I would remain a secretary until I married. It showed me that with the right sort of application I could completely change the course of my life. I knew after one term that I wanted to return to some form of education no matter what the cost financially or personally.' After three years' study she achieved a BA degree (2.2) and was accepted for a two-year social work diploma course. She had in the meantime tested out the range of interests she had developed in voluntary work with mentally and physically handicapped people and as a paid ancillary worker in the Probation Service where she now aims to make her career after training. She says that the outcome of her total venture 'broadened my outlook to the extent that my social life was made up of an entirely new set of people. It gave me the confidence to compete for work on an equal basis with middle-class people by raising my own class consciousness.'

Full-time women students

Table 5, covering women who graduated after attending the three types of City Lit courses and the mid-week course at Richmond, shows the degree to which the full-time students are the product of minimal early schooling with the evening students a little better circumstanced in that respect.

The full-time course, requiring twenty hours a week attendance for thirty weeks stretched the students intensively and, it is to be remembered, two-thirds of them also had family responsibilities to meet. Nevertheless, within the week, there was more time for tutorials and for day-to-day encounters with tutors and fellow students to help to build up learning confidence. There is no such thing as a 'typical' student's

Table 5 *Degree results of women Fresh Horizons and Fresh Start students in relation to earlier education*

	Class of degree							School-leaving age					School-leaving quals.					
Course	1st	2.1	2.2	3	pass DHE	N K	gave up	15	16	17	18	N K	'A's	5 'O's	1–4 'O's	none	N K	totals
London																		
Part-time day	2	23	11	2	2	4	7	12	16	10	11	2	12	13	6	17	3	51
Part-time evening	-	8	2	-	2	-	-	5	4	3	-	-	1	5	2	3	1	12
Full-time	-	5	11	-	3	3	1	9	9	5	-	-	-	6	4 & 2 CSEs	10	1	23
Totals	2	36	24	2	7	7	8	26	29	18	11	2	13	24	14	30	5	86
Richmond																		
Part-time mid-week	1 & 1PG	9	7	-	2	-	-	5	8	3	4	-	2	8	7	3	-	20

Table 6 *Socio-economic group by own occupation – London full-time and evening women students c/f Martin and Roberts survey*

	Category	Martin & Roberts (full-time work)	Questionnaire respondents	
			Full-time students	Evening students
		%	%	%
I	Professional	1	-	3
II	Intermediate	24	13	15
IIIA	Skilled non-manual	45	68	79
IIIB	Skilled manual	8	8	-
IV	Semi-skilled	20	11	3
V	Unskilled	2		

case history but the following account of one student's experience illustrates the process.

From the class of 1978

'My early years at senior school were hampered by failing 11-plus and being put in a low stream where everything was so easy that I came top of the class. I was put in the top stream in my third year where I did badly as I didn't think I had to work to do well. My family didn't encourage openly or help in my schooling. I was also branded a bit of a troublemaker because of my sister. One rather elderly teacher constantly marked me down from the day she discovered whose sister I was – a point proved by swapping essays with her star pupil. She got top marks for my essay: I still got the lowest mark with hers. With little or no help from school or home, I left half-way through the fifth year before CSEs or 'O's to work in a shop.'

Although turned off school she was not turned off study for she relates that she went to classes on two evenings a week and studied at home to get good results in 4 'O' levels, while working as a shop assistant. A six-months' TOPS course with nine RSA passes led to an office job. This was not, in itself, enough to extend her sights. She writes: 'Attending the Fresh Horizons course completely changed the direction

of my life. It made possible a reassessment of myself, abilities, and opportunities only dreamt of before. I developed a confidence in myself that I had never experienced before.' Counselling, she says, 'was essential for helping to put into perspective your own development and in showing you opportunities you might never have considered'. She emerged later from a full-time university course in economic and social history with an Upper Second degree and, while working as an administrative officer for a registered charity, she is studying part-time for an accountancy qualification. Though earlier she had not thought of herself as seeking a 'career', 'the seeds were sown in Fresh Horizons and grew through my university years'. She now finds her work opportunities 'greatly improved', having the confidence to apply for better jobs and knowledge of 'how to present yourself on paper, analyzing what an employer wants and trying to adapt personal experience and knowledge to fit'. She claims herself as 'politically' more aware but also as having greater enjoyment of and more discriminating appreciation for the theatre and literature.

Richmond women students

Once again the results achieved at degree level by these mature women illustrate the short-term outlook of girls and their parents when deciding on future careers. Only seven of the group of twenty who had completed full-time degrees had schooling beyond the age of 16. To some extent this reflects the lower leaving-age when the older women in the group were at school (seven were over 40 when they started their degree courses), but there were as many women in their late 20s and 30s who had clearly left school prematurely, in relation to their abilities. It is obvious that, even in the relatively well-to-do families from which many of these women sprang it was thought that, at 16 with some 'O' levels, a girl was set up for life. They are all the more handicapped when seeking to return to work in competition with the greater number of girls who, in more recent years, have gone on to do 'A' levels and to enter higher education.

The standard of degree results also demonstrates the short-sightedness of estimating the academic capacity of adults by reference to school-leaving qualifications without regard to historical circumstances and the values of mature life experience and learning. The Richmond Fresh Start students who went on to graduate do not differ in early school experience from those who did not seek entry to higher education. All but two or three of the graduate group had one or more children at home while studying full-time, some of them at the infant-school stage. The case-study below provides an example of how early leaving, marriage, children and husband's career can combine to make a fresh

start a necessity if a woman's capacity is to have its proper outlet – and even then the problems don't go away!

From the Richmond class of 1979

She left grammar school in 1963. She was then 16 and had 9 'O' levels. The school was in process of reorganization and it was not suggested that she should take 'A' levels. She started work with an insurance firm and began qualifying for an associateship of the Chartered Insurance Institute. After two years' correspondence study she was given half-a-day-a-week release for study in the third year. By the time she married at 20, she had passed Parts 1 and 2 examinations. Her husband's work, as a specialist engineer, took her to Africa, South America, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Thailand. In all these countries she worked with a variety of local organizations and projects in different capacities and, in the absence of expatriate schools, undertook the early education of her own two children. Returning to England, without her husband, when they were 8 and 6, to start their formal education, she joined the Fresh Start course to find some social contact outside the home. 'I am a serious individual', she writes, 'and did want to see some concrete result for my effort. I therefore undertook the 'A' level sociology course at the college simultaneously and found the two mutually reinforcing, although the work-load was quite substantial.'

At that time, the college of higher education most convenient to where she lived was required, by an edict of London University Institute of Education, to demand one 'A' level as a condition of admission of mature candidates. They would not accept a recommendation on the basis of her Fresh Start performance, although in previous years 'unqualified' Fresh Start students had obtained excellent degree results at the College. Nor was her extensive working experience abroad in and around irrigation projects, and her insurance work considered adequate evidence of her capacity to cope with a combined degree in sociology and environmental studies. She passed her sociology 'A' level after nine months' study while carrying through her assignments for the Fresh Start course. After graduating with an Upper Second and by then divorced, she started part-time postgraduate studies in town-planning but was doubtful if she could afford the fees for the third year.

But she poses another problem:

> 'The Fresh Start course marked the beginning of a new phase in my life and obviously, as children become independent it is possible to give more attention to oneself. However it encouraged me to get more educational qualifications which I have done – but where such a woman as myself finds a niche in the big wide world is still just as hazy as ever.'

The next stage

The Richmond student just quoted might have been helped if there were more sources of advice and information. How both the London and Richmond courses did succeed in putting some people on the right track is told by some of our respondents, including those whose experience of higher education took them beyond the limits of the fresh-start teams. Fresh-start courses include information and advice sessions but, as everyone who attempts educational and career counselling at the adult level inevitably finds, the problems are complex and time-consuming.

Within the time and framework of the encounters made during the courses and the searches of the students in guides and prospectuses, as their interests were clarified and firmed, it was possible for new outlets to be found. Nor is this the end: the tutorial team welcome former students seeking aid and often supply supporting references long after students have completed their initial courses.

Some thirty of the women who graduated after attending London and Richmond courses have told in their questionnaire replies about their subsequent work. A degree does not of itself guarantee entry to a profession and graduates have supplemented their degrees with courses directly related to social, youth and community work as well as teaching. In this they have frequently built on the experience of earlier voluntary or part-time work in play-group leadership or in organizations for the care of the elderly and disabled. 'Without a degree', said one graduate, 'I would not have been able to take the qualification and without Fresh Horizons, I would not have had a degree.' A number of women obtained postgraduate certificates in education and here again they were often using experience or earlier-gained qualifications, when making an entry at a higher level.

A native French speaker, after a combined honours course (English and French) is happy teaching her mother tongue full-time in a secondary school; a musician was able to secure a full-time peripatetic post once she had graduate status. Qualifications in teaching English as a foreign language, basic adult education, lip-reading, counselling, library and information science all became more accessible to them as graduates. Others built on earlier junior arts training – one to take a fine arts degree and establish her own gallery, another to work as an art therapist and a third to move into textile design. A former secretary qualified for an advanced TOPS course in computing. Others are working in executive posts in social administration, local government and voluntary organizations or combining editorial work with administration. There is a frequently expressed opinion that, apart from the piece of paper, their better intellectual training has contributed importantly to their enhanced confidence and ability to tackle new work.

It seems to have been a harder task if the chosen profession is one without much experience of late or unusual entrants – law and architecture provided up-hill struggles for two aspirants. At least five are known to have acquired, or be in process of acquiring, higher degrees but the cost prohibited several who were accepted from taking up the opportunity to do so. Four years' loss of earnings while pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies – fees alone for the latter were £600 – led to family debt in one instance which post-course earnings were not adequate to clear.

Of those who decided not to enter higher education, some were stimulated to undertake full-time training that would up-date earlier-acquired qualifications. Among the Richmond respondents eleven did so: a former nurse took a course in obstetrics; one found the courage to take a refresher course and work as a medical photographer for which she had trained many years before. Another nurse wrote: 'Initially I wished only to do something worthwhile out of the house and meet other people but I enjoyed the mental stimulus and decided to up-date my qualifications by taking an occupational health certificate.' A single woman, anxious to train for nursing, was accepted on the strength of the Fresh Start course and supplementary 'O' levels. Four took secretarial qualifications on TOPS courses, one as a medical secretary; another became the office manager for a political party. From the eighteen who returned to work or continued in the job they had before the fresh-start course came such comments as: 'I realized that academic achievement was not for me and that I had a reasonably interesting job already' and: 'I began to work for a voluntary organization which developed enormously. I am now the organizer'.

Others combined part-time work with part-time study including some who obtained 'O' and 'A' levels for the first time while working. One took an Open University associate course while doing part-time nursing and another a family-planning certificate course. A Yoga teacher started part-time training as an adult tutor as did a part-time youth leader. A seminar course, started at the Richmond Adult and Community College, and university extramural diploma courses provided opportunities for some to use and extend the learning skills acquired on their Fresh Start courses. Others, whose family or health circumstances prevented working out of the home or full-time training, continued to find study outlets at the college and elsewhere. Two were deeply critical that the cost prevented them from taking part-time degree courses.

Among the rest, who were not involved in work or further study, there were impediments such as severe illness, a husband's transfer to new work or retirement. For one:

> 'an unplanned pregnancy led to being spared from making a decision about further education but due to this my husband and I found

ourselves critically examining our life-style. We found we would like to share more time together and are exploring a joint business venture. The Fresh Start was not irrelevant however. It made me conscious of the pleasure of learning for its own sake.'

The women from the three different types of London courses cannot fairly be compared with those on the Richmond courses. More of the part-time day students in London opted for full-time higher education. Those who did not, record starting work in their former jobs, joining a husband as a full business partner, working as a part-time housing auxiliary as well as starting an extra-mural diploma course. One went to a full-time Access course, others to courses in herbal medicine and retailing. Several hope, after further study, to apply for full-time courses, but one writes: 'Visions of being a lawyer or a doctor vanished and I am using my Fresh Horizons experience as a main reference for jobs as we are buying our first home.' A divorced woman summed up her changed life: 'After the course I moved house, stopped smoking, got a new job and became a motorist.'

Limits of choice

Critics may find the range of outlets in study and training unduly limited to preparation for traditional roles even though they may be undertaken at higher levels. National policy may aim to concentrate education and training on the so-called new technologies and on science and engineering generally but much greater resources would need to be committed and basic attitudes overhauled, for fresh-start courses to offer any major break-through for women in those fields. There have been some experimental courses on fresh-start lines, financed partly by the EEC Social Fund, such as the Glamorgan Women's Workshop cited in a recent report of the Equal Opportunities Commission, which has enabled a number of unskilled women to obtain employment in science-based occupations. Women carry out the most intricate and delicate assembly work in the electronic industries but they are invisible to the employer looking for a trainee supervisor. Neither the City Lit nor the Richmond Adult and Community College is equipped for science teaching but science has been represented in the Richmond course for some years and mathematics has always been an element in London Fresh Horizons courses.

In the case of science, there may be a certain amount of background knowledge lurking in students' memories from school domestic science or nursing courses and much interest in health and environmental matters on which to draw but there is a lot of fear blocking the entry in returning to mathematics. At both centres, presentation of these subjects has benefited from unconventional teaching approaches after initial difficulties in staffing were overcome. Study and research into

new ways of making these subjects acceptable and exciting to women might percolate through to the schools where girls so often become switched off science in the first place. Something of this is indeed already being done.[1]

At present it is substantially true that fresh-start courses, wherever they have emerged, have had their basis almost entirely in the humanities. As indicated by job preferences, it is where the learning and learned experience of women is ready to be tapped. They are the subjects that were liked at school; family life has provided practical experience of psychology; in the world of people and how society around you is organized and works, a basis exists for a more impersonal and generalized study in sociology. To some extent, also, such studies are felt as an extension of the caring functions, assuaging for some the residual guilt they feel about deserting the nest.

A considerable proportion of the women on these courses have, as typists, clerks, telephone operators, secretaries, waitresses and shop assistants, been accustomed to working with words written and spoken. If they have been isolated at home with young children, they find a tremendous relief in meeting other adults and talking and discussing with them. Having in the main verbal aptitudes, they absorb the reading and tackle the written work with increasing satisfaction and assurance as confidence grows. It is not surprising, therefore, that they develop interest in psychology, sociology, history and literature as subjects for fresh-start and degree studies. They will accept environmental studies, social biology and geography as relating to humanly desirable objectives. Interest in commercially inspired studies – economics and business management – is rarer. As many of them have already found themselves overlooked in these employments and relegated to the humdrum ends of them, it is hardly surprising that they view any future prospects in the same areas with care. It may also be a factor that, when employed as junior members of commercial establishments, they did not always relish the practices they encountered when set beside their own experience of working altruistically and unpaid as housewives, mothers and volunteers in social activities.

A new possible outlet for well-qualified women-returners who are interested in obtaining entry into better status commercial employment exists in the EEC funded 'Back to business' course started at Richmond in 1984. But women are essentially practical in making their choices: the market they will look for is the one that is willing to accept them, even if it is crowded.

Part 2

Other initiatives

5	'Return to study' and 'Return to work'	64
6	Open learning – Open College	73
7	Accent on Access	84
8	'Higher' and 'further'	94
9	'Adult' and 'continuing' for the class of women	108

5
'Return to study' and 'Return to work'

Fresh-start courses, in their beginnings, were a response to a perceived need by women to relaunch themselves in a world of opening opportunities in the late 1960s and 1970s. In an article in *Adult Education* in July 1979[1] a review of existing courses showed them to be centred in the following types of institutions: adult education centres, university extra-mural departments, further education and technical colleges and, to a lesser degree, colleges of higher education and polytechnics. Some seventy 'Return to study' courses varying in length and resources were identified outside arrangements for GCE study.

The initiators were usually women tutors in adult education who, if not active feminists, were much in sympathy with the equal opportunities legislation of the 1970s. They received a ready response from the women they recruited and the courses succeeded. The principals and directors of sponsoring adult education institutions were pleased with the success of the courses even if, from time to time, wary of the implications they brought with them. There was a need to provide counselling and guidance for extended studies on a scale not hitherto encountered in adult education. Without a direct vocational intent the courses were drawing students who were exploring vocational possibilities.[2]

They cut across the set pattern of two hours once-a-week, mainly evening classes, that dominated provision whether by local education authorities, universities or the WEA. With changing patterns of domestic circumstances, women could make use of day-time hours for work or outside activities, their most intense family commitments being concentrated in the evenings. The need for crèche and child-minding provision loomed up – individual fresh-start students have been much in-

volved in the play-groups movement (at present a network of 14,000 groups), a spontaneous, woman-directed, voluntary initiative that is as much a vehicle for adult as for child education.

The increasing constraints on education have made many inroads into the resources available for fresh-start work. Fees, transport and play-group costs deter potential students: there remains a huge unsatisfied demand, often unrecognized until tapped. To those who have been active in promotion, it is sobering to find that a short *Women's Hour* broadcast on the YWCA 'Breakaway' and SCOPE courses in 1985 released the same sort of response from all parts of the country that had come from newly alerted women nearly twenty years before, e.g.: 'I identified very strongly with the emotions and opinions expressed by the women featured'; 'Sounds so exactly the kind of thing needed for women like myself – ten years at home bringing up three children'; 'I am now divorced with three grown sons and, at 47, wonder what life has to offer'; 'I am a single parent, 25 years old, looking for work but with no qualifications or experience'.

Further Opportunities in Focus, published in 1980,[3] took a look at 'Bridging' courses for women, the 'focus' being affected by the tunnel vision of the commissioning agency – the Further Education Unit. The researcher, Sheila Stoney, locating relevant courses with some difficulty in the restricted area of further education, with its main emphasis on vocational courses for school-leavers, placed what she found in two categories – 'Return to study' and 'Return to work'.

'NOW' courses at Hatfield

A response to the need for 'Return to work' courses has been provided by 'New Opportunities for Women' (NOW) courses. Beginning in 1971 on the initiative of Ruth Michaels of Hatfield Polytechnic, they have provided a course model for similar enterprises elsewhere. They normally consist of a series of meetings on one day a week for up to ten weeks.

A NOW course aims 'to be a comprehensive guide for the mature woman who may wish to return to active life but is unsure as to how best to do so. It aims to help the student to become acquainted with the opportunities that exist for re-entry to education or re-training, for part-time or full-time employment, second careers or voluntary service'. It is further intended to 'help the student to gain self-confidence and establish long-term goals, based on her individual interests, abilities and aspirations'.[4]

Nearly all such courses lead to a demand for an educationally directed sequel and some NOW courses have contrived to provide this larger element within them or adjacent to them. At Hatfield Polytechnic the

'Polyprep' courses opened up the way for late entrants to degree courses, and provision for part-time attendance makes this easier for those at work or with family responsibilities.

The YWCA – 'Breakaway' and SCOPE

But initiatives have not always come from within the formal educational environment itself. The YWCA, whose broadcast is referred to above, marking International Women's Year in 1974, were concerned about 'women who, having spent some years caring for their families, felt the need to extend their interests outside the domestic sphere once the children were at school or had left home'. As a response, they launched in East Anglia a series of 'Breakaway' courses usually extending over two days. Though drawing inspiration from NOW courses, they were and are held in different towns and village communities. The YWCA Field Officer, Mary Lewis, and later her assistant, Sheila Bly, found a venue and created a programme through which the groups of women they gathered together could explore work and educational possibilities with guest speakers drawn from agencies such as the careers, employment and education services.

This led to an inevitable demand for longer courses and though 'enquiries amongst workers in the Further and Community Education fields produced expressions of sympathy and agreement', they were 'coupled with the advice that the necessary finance was not available from local authority sources'.[5] It was decided to go ahead with a project for a one-day-a-week course spread over ten weeks and a local committee was formed, drawn from the careers service, the college of further education, the WEA and the Open University, among others. This became the basis of a management committee that has organized the SCOPE courses (Second Chance Opportunities and Education for Women) that have taken place in Cambridge since 1981. Other SCOPE courses, with a different provenance, have been held in Colchester and many of the students have looked for further educational opportunities on leaving the course.

They form part of a mixed enterprise of activity by the YWCA in the field of informal education for women. The scheme has been precariously funded and in this connection it may be worth quoting from the policy document of the Further Education Unit now admitting to a need for 'Changing the focus':

> There is now considerable scope for the development of provision for women returners to education and training, as well as updating courses for those in work. It is worth noting that some of the most imaginative schemes using alternative sources of funding like the

European Social Fund and Inner Area Programmes have been developed outside the education system by municipal and voluntary agencies. It may be that the education/training of 'mature' women is perceived as politically fashionable, developed only by those who consider themselves progressive and perhaps as a result not taken seriously by others. The fact remains that 'women represent 50% of the nation's talent and 40% of the work-force' so their education and training needs are hardly to be regarded as marginal.[6]

SCOPE participants

The nineteen completed questionnaires we received from former SCOPE students tell us something about the women whose needs were identified by the organizers. Originally thought of as 'Return to work' courses, they have with the growth of unemployment widened their range and extended into social and women's studies.

Nevertheless, the organizer writes: 'A very high proportion of the students have obtained work, which is one reason why it is difficult to keep in touch with them. One is about to open her own shop in Cambridge; another when last heard of was busily turning her house into a nursery school.'

The questionnaire respondents whom we were able to contact from these courses may not, therefore, be entirely typical. Eighteen had children at home, three of them had children under 5 and two were single parents. Though they were heavily involved as parents they did not claim to be fully occupied at home. Seven were in fact working part-time, one as a family-planning nurse, several in family businesses, while a hairdresser planned to extend her private practice into a commercial one; others were quite extensively engaged in voluntary work. Some were planning to take 'A' levels and one to take a degree course.

It was not that they were without initial training after their school years: six had either two or three years' teacher training; several had acquired office skills at one time or another. There were several SRNs and one woman had an ONC in business studies. All-in-all, a considerable personal expertise and investment in training and experience are revealed but the circumstances of their later lives and restricted opportunities have led to what can be frustrating limitations.

The SCOPE course gave them an insight into what might be done immediately. Eight joined a term's 'Return to study' course at the Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology and others took courses that, in the words of one respondent, they 'didn't know about before the course'. Nevertheless there was a considerable change from original intentions to prepare for return to work, training or further education into the direction of personal development. This arose from a realistic appraisal of the possibilities easily and immediately open to them and

a fresh look at the existing situation exemplified by the woman who wrote:

> 'I started the "Return to study" course which I found fascinating but I realized that although I had thought what I wanted to do was take a degree or something like that, really it was for prestige purposes – most of my friends and neighbours are professional people . . . What I want to do is either get myself a very well paid and interesting office job, work from my own home or just enjoy my already busy life.'

Another described how she found the other women on the course, 'so helpful and supportive that it was a positive feed-back situation for nearly all of us . . . I suddenly discovered I was free to do what I wanted with my spare time. Housework was a doddle compared to the past.' She decided to extend her voluntary work as a 'befriender' to two mentally disturbed people returned to community living, and now helps to run a training scheme for befrienders. She also represents the scheme at local meetings, 'doesn't mind speaking in public and is involved with its policy and with the Community Health Council'. She is also working as a volunteer with the SCOPE course. Her husband commented: 'What about a SCOPE course for men?'

Not all the respondents found husbands and family ready to accept a change. One of the SCOPE students saw the younger child starting school as an 'opportunity to do something to fill time constructively to ensure that when my children left home I was not a vegetable'. Though she had a scientific qualification and a three-year teacher training, her husband and children

> 'did not like the idea of me not being available and at home. There was quite a lot of resistance to the thought that I might want to work and the old chestnut of the holidays came up. The "if you can earn as much as I can, go ahead" syndrome was thrown at me. Now I work for nothing at the CAB which SCOPE introduced me to.'

The interest and help of local institutions has been invoked throughout and considerable co-operation has been achieved with some of them. But if maximum mutual support is to be secured there needs to be a strong commitment throughout adult, further and higher education both to expansion of opportunities for women and to co-operation with voluntary initiatives of the kind reviewed here.

Swarthmore – Fresh Start

The classification of 'Bridging courses' into 'Return to work', such as the NOW courses and 'Return to study', such as Fresh Horizons is

perhaps too broad to allow for the various modifications that have emerged. A 'Return to work' course may develop 'Return to study' characteristics in exploring, for example, the background to work and the factors in women's working lives. It may then lead the students to further study rather than to work. Similarly a fresh-start course that invites people back to study also exposes participants to information and counselling relating to work prospects and the student's final decision may lead her directly into a job or into further training towards one. The taxonomy of courses within this range has been the subject of exploration and discussion[7] and it was suggested that the characteristic nature of fresh-start courses was developmental, a concept that does not fit well with latter-day dogmas of closely defined training programmes or tied outlets.

The Fresh Start courses at the Swarthmore Centre, Leeds, exemplify this. Based on the general pattern of fresh-start courses of linked subjects, counselling and information on further opportunities, they are useful, belonging to so different an environment, to compare with the metropolitan and south-east suburban provenance of the work covered by the main study.

Forty-one former Swarthmore students completed questionnaires, a sample of about 14 per cent of the 250-300 students who had taken courses between 1975 and 1983. In fact the course did not take off properly until 1979 when a grant from the Equal Opportunities Commission for one year allowed a part-time tutor to be employed; from 1980 onwards the Centre has funded the post.

Swarthmore is a full-time, independent adult education centre founded in 1909, aided by the Leeds local education authority and run by a voluntary committee with considerable student participation. The premises, in the centre of Leeds, make possible the provision of a varied programme, day and evening, helped by the existence of an attached crèche and play-group largely dependent on voluntary aid and funds. The Fresh Start courses do not cover their costs from fees and are subsidized from the general funds of the Centre. An enrolment of sixty students a year has been built up into a range of courses of five or ten hours per week for thirty weeks. The 'Foundation' course of ten hours (two days a week) covers a programme including psychology, literature, sociology and history with communication skills and tutorial sessions. It may also be taken over two years on one day a week.

Contributing to its intake is a 'Gateway' course of five hours a week for students with heavy commitments who cannot undertake the larger demands of the main foundation course or who need initial help with communication skills. The 'Continuation' course, also five hours a week, provides a topping-up for those with more recent experience of study. The courses are inter-connected with, apparently, flexible move-

ment between them in response to students' wishes and tutorial encouragement. Development of study skills is relevant to and linked with the teaching of specific subjects. The eight tutors involved in different parts of the programme are members of a team concerned with the needs of individual students. The tutor-organizer is the link-woman with them as well as with outside agencies, in the six hours a week allotted to her for counselling and contact; tutors' consultation meetings are not usually paid for.

Pre-course counselling is available throughout the year and at enrolment times and throughout the course there are opportunities for outcomes to be suggested and assisted. Homework, in the form of written assignments of progressive difficulty, is voluntary but most students do some and some do all that is suggested.

The whole approach is relaxed and flexible and students' questionnaire responses echo this. A much appreciated element of the courses is a residential weekend or week at Northern College, the most recently established of the eight full-time residential colleges for adult education in Britain. Up to four groups of twelve students a year attend for courses designed as part of their Fresh Start commitment. Pam Cole, the tutor-organizer, writes: 'The students gain so much from the residential experience – to have been to "College" and slept there and coped, does wonders for their confidence': for some it also leads to full-time studentships. The full-time students at the City Lit also have such a residential experience and Richmond students now find short courses open to them at Hillcroft College. If even short periods of residence can be introduced as a curricular element of the fresh-start course with its own tutors taking part, the whole experience is enriched and the educational focus extended.

Swarthmore students have been fortunate in that the local education authority, as one of the supporters of the Northern College, has heavily subsidized their residential periods. Much of the inadequate central funding of adult education goes to students on the long courses at these colleges. The Swarthmore example indicates one of the ways in which the benefits they can offer could be much more widely spread.

North and south – some student comparisons

Appendix 1 Table A7 compares some of the personal characteristics of students at Swarthmore with those on the London and Richmond courses. Swarthmore students had left school earlier (80 per cent by 16) as against about half of equivalent London and Richmond day students, markedly more of whom had some school-leaving qualifications. More Swarthmore students had worked in manual trades in the first place but nevertheless half had been employed in skilled non-manual occupations,

reflecting again the limited range of employment opportunities open to girls and women. However, within the classification that lumps so many of us together, there was a telephonist who had started out as a sewing machinist, another who had moved from book-binding to radio operator, a tailoress turned waitress and finally care assistant. Even within the lives of this small group, the disappearing traditional clothing trades have been replaced by clerical and service jobs, if any.

The work their mothers did was much more part of the Leeds tradition. From the Swarthmore survey, information was available about parents' jobs and the size of families. One-third of the mothers of students were given as full-time housewives (thirteen of the respondents came from families of between four and eleven children). Otherwise the largest group – nine – had been employed in the clothing and allied trades – weaving, clothing make-up, upholstery. Similarly, nine of the fathers were skilled tradesmen.

In moving on from their Fresh Start courses most of these women had further to go than their southern counterparts. Three of them, however, were on full-time degree courses and one had already qualified as a graduate librarian with an Upper Second degree and was working as an information officer. Three were studying for degrees, part-time, two with the Open University. Of the four men who replied, two were studying for degrees. Less ambitiously, part-time studies included 'O' and 'A' levels, mature matriculation, a diploma in management studies, a first-aid certificate, tourist guide courses and a variety of liberal and general studies in the Centre and elsewhere.

For over half of these respondents, a larger proportion than elsewhere, the Fresh Start course had been a first introduction to the adult education world. Apart from subsequent study, eight women started some form of voluntary social work after the course; five started paid work, sometimes after a long break. Only seven record no related post-course job, study or voluntary work.

More than on any of the other courses considered, the Swarthmore students were prompted to enrol as part of a change in their way of life. Nine mentioned moving house, and bereavement, divorce, unemployment or retirement affected fifteen. One woman described how the multiple changes of divorce and consequent house removal and children leaving home had led to 'lost concentration, sleep, sense of purpose and doing something worthwhile'. An unemployed woman wrote: 'I felt I needed to do something to prove I was still useful' – although by that time she was 54, she moved into a new job after the course.

The counselling sessions were much appreciated in relation to this – 'It is nice to know there is someone you can, with confidence, ask for information and advice' and 'I found it comforting' were two comments in addition to commendations of the information provided about

opportunities and encouragement to take them up. One woman who left school at 14 and had started further studies at the Northern College summed up more than her own reactions when she wrote: 'For me the course served two purposes, a sounding-off board for continuing education and a life-line for a home- and family-bound mum. It was the beginning of a new way of life.'

Work returners – 'TOPS' and 'WOW'

'Return to work' courses, directly vocational in concept, have been offered by the Department of Employment through the TOPS (Training Opportunities Scheme) and WOW (Wider Opportunities for Women) projects. The first largely offered skill development for women in traditional areas of office work – shorthand, typing, book-keeping. WOW courses, following precedents set by the NOW model, provided access to information about jobs, visits to workplaces and re-orientation to working life outside the home. Keen adult education tutors have made the best of these opportunities despite the inevitable restrictions imposed by many of the officials monitoring the courses. Equally inevitably, for women released by them into self-development, they have provided a spring-board for activities well beyond their original intent. The Extra-Mural Department of the University of Edinburgh has been able to mount such courses successfully since 1979.[8] The now diminished budget for this type of work and changes of policy within the MSC reduce even such opportunities for the future.

The European Social Fund as previously noted is a possible source of support for courses intended to secure more equal chances for women in work and training where opportunities do not match their potential abilities. Over and beyond these possibilities, the traditional providing agencies of adult education can, to a certain extent, look to funds made available to the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education under the National Training Initiative which is discussed in Chapter 9.

6
Open learning - Open College

Extending further the range of Sheila Stoney's division of courses between 'Return to study' and 'Return to work' are the further excursions into adult re-tooling and development in education comprised in 'Open College' and 'Access' courses. The first title implies an instruction-led base for activity, the second an intended and contrived built-in outcome for the students. There has also been much discussion in recent years about open learning systems, influenced to some extent by the titling of the Open University. 'Open' in this context implies the reduction of barriers traditionally erected by institutions to exclude off-comers from the groves of academe and to limit their wanderings within them. But much of the discussion on open learning and the conformities that even an 'open' university must observe are foreign to the experience of those working in the field of liberal, non-vocationally inspired adult education. As the poor relation, adult education in this sense may have to bear the constraints of poverty but it has a fair amount of freedom to experiment, if it will use it, so long as it can pay its way and satisfy its clientele. Grant aid may depend on observance of administrative formulae but what is taught is conditioned by what students desire and not merely by set syllabuses designed by a detached board of studies. It is a common experience that in GCE courses provided for mature students an uneasy tension arises when a class combines students who want simply to learn and explore with others whose sole purpose is to pass an examination.

Alternatives to 'A' levels

It was the inappropriate character of the GCE route for adults seeking access to higher education that led to much discussion in the 1970s as

to the desirability of setting up a mature students' alternative to 'A' levels, the term itself implying, once again, access through examination. Some universities were already operating their own admission procedures for mature entry. A review of these published in 1979, by the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE),[1] showed them to be limited in number and scope. Possibly the longest running one – that of the Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board – provides that each of the constituent universities (Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham), is responsible for the setting of a special test which is 'of a nature suitable for mature candidates who may have very different educational backgrounds'. The university receiving the application for admission decides whether to require this test and to set and mark it. The total number of candidates for places under this scheme in 1978 was 243, 25 per cent of whom failed to pass the test. The authors of the ACACE paper commented:

> This scheme is not universally approved even within the constituent universities. It has been criticised as a disincentive in that it requires preparation of a general kind (a Maths paper is commonly required in practice) that disadvantages a student who has a clear subject interest in view and who has already been attending classes in it. In other words the test operates, like 'A' level, as a self-contained selection device rather than a preparation for further study.

Students at Fircroft, a one-year course residential college for adults, to whom we spoke in their first term in the Autumn of 1984, were experiencing at the time suitable nervous apprehension at the imminent approach of the test, a regular part of their initiation ceremony. The tutor, in a more relaxed environment at the Swarthmore Centre in Leeds, advising students on the Fresh Start course, told us that in her experience, suitable candidates had no difficulty in surmounting the obstacle, providing the university faculty in question was prepared to accept students under the scheme.

Open College of the North-West

The drawback about such limited schemes has been that courses such as that at Swarthmore, capable of being used as preparatory, are few and far between. The move that was to link specific preparation with specific access came with the establishment in 1976, through action by Nelson and Colne College in Lancashire, of the Open College of the North-West. The scheme was designed to secure admission to the University of Lancaster and Preston (now Lancashire) Polytechnic, via two-stage part-time courses to be provided at a number of centres, mostly colleges of further education in the north-west of England. Provision

for evaluative research was built in from the start.

In a sense the Open College concept was a derivative of the already well-established fresh-start approach to adult needs for returning to a formalized learning endeavour. In biological terms the various experiments until then and later, formed a 'gene' pool and mutations were strongly influenced by the environment in which they were conceived. The colleges of further education that bred and fostered the Open College of the North-West are primarily immediate post-school and training establishments. The staff are used to working within a culture of credit accretion and stage-by-stage achievement of a set norm of verifiable growth. This was very apparent at a conference at Lancaster University in 1980, attended by 160 representatives of some fifty institutions of which twenty-five were colleges of further education; universities, polytechnics and colleges of education numbered fifteen and adult institutes and community colleges made up the small remainder. The large numbers applying for a minimally advertised conference, and the considerable muster on the day, indicated that interest in such ventures was widespread. But it was noteworthy that much of the discussion centred round worries about validating the 'level' of the courses, within the established pecking order, and the effects on the colleges, rather than on the needs of the new venture students.

By the time of this conference there were Open College courses at twelve centres attached to the Open Colleges Federation of the North-West. Work was in progress on a formal constitution and syllabus content was well under construction. Courses are in two stages, the first, Stage A, being non-examined but affording a profile of attainment to students. Two Stage A units relate to study methods and four are subject-based. This allows for a fresh-start type of approach in which learning develops without examination pressure. Although the whole certificate-validated course is based on completion of six Stage A units and two at Stage B, in practice the students take what they want or need, making use of the courses actually available to them. The scheme makes provision, in effect, for a modified equivalent of the two-stage school-leaving certificates offered at the two levels of 'Ordinary' and 'Advanced' in the secondary school system of GCEs.

Stage B units are based on subject syllabuses, devised jointly with tutors from the linked higher education institutions who also take part in setting end-of-course examinations and advising on assessment and marking. A 60 per cent pass is regarded as evidence of suitability for acceptance on a degree course. As in GCE courses offered to adults, tension can arise when a class consists of keen would-be examinees, who want to stick to the letter of the syllabus, students who want to follow the spin-off from it and those who are halfway between and ready to drop out as their intentions waver.

The Open College of the North-West does not claim to be aimed wholly at providing access to higher education. David Moore, its begetter, also identified as students, adults 'who wished to retrieve past failures', those who were looking for a 'further experience of general education' at 'intermediate level' and others who would take modules of the course to meet specific career or vocational needs.[2] Much of its infra-structure, however, is related to its 'access' function. A federal body implies a constitution, a degree of conformity by its members and central monitoring. A series of committees, sub-committees and co-ordinators inevitably arises.

The individual federated colleges are thinly spread over a wide area and Open College courses are a relatively small part of their total programmes. Not surprisingly some have taken them up more enthusiastically than others. Not all are able to offer a full range of the Stage B courses – one offers as many as twenty-five but others offer none. Certainly, in the early years of the scheme, students were often disappointed that a B course through which they wanted to continue their studies was not available, except perhaps at a prohibitive distance. A survey of over 700 Open College students of both stages, conducted in September 1984, revealed that 18 per cent were travelling more than six miles to attend their classes: the main body, however, had travelling distances of under two miles.[3]

Research and assessment

The progress of the Open College has been the subject of research by Keith Percy of the University of Lancaster and others. They have published two reports that follow the history of the 1979 intake of students.[4,5] Questionnaires were sent to 501 students registered in April 1979: 306 of those who replied were approached again in 1981 and of these 185 provided further replies, i.e. 37 per cent of the original 501. The follow-up showed that only 28 per cent had completed any Stage B (i.e. second stage) units, most of the students having been satisfied with two Stage As, the preliminary study-skills courses, only. It was clear that few people were going to complete the full six units that would gain them a course certificate.

Later the research team interviewed nine of the original sample who had gone on to full-time higher education, all, as it happens, at Lancaster University. They found 'that the group had come to higher education through a variety of routes in which the Open College had played differing roles'. Two had no Stage B experience; one completed four Stage A units and was admitted on the strength of additional written work. Three had taken one Stage B unit only; three only had completed the 'full' Open College course. Looking at the subsequent

progress of the scheme it appears that, in the eight years that the full course certificate has been available, it had by the summer of 1984 been awarded to 140 students.

Total enrolments in Stage A courses in 1983 exceeded 1,100, probably covering some 500 individuals. The numbers taking the advanced Stage B units by that time were probably over 300 annually. By September 1983, 169 Open College students had been admitted to a total of twenty-three institutions of higher education and by summer 1984 over 40 had graduated, generally at a high level[6]. 'The fourteen students who were admitted to Lancaster University in September 1984 show that the Open College is fulfilling its role of providing an alternative to 'A' levels. Only two had no prior qualifications and they had taken the full Open College course. The remainder had 'O's in varying numbers; six had at least one 'A' level and had completed their admission claims with Open College Stage Bs.[6] Not a lot of risk had been taken by the university in admitting them!

What seems to emerge is that the more substantial part of the Open College achievement has come in the area that was originally conceived as 'spin-off' from the main purpose, i.e. the diverse use made of it by students rather than a steady plod through a series of credits to higher education. In summing up his research Keith Percy finds that the Stage A study skills units were particularly effective in providing a starting point and building confidence to take off from it, often in another direction than that indicated by the Open College itself.

The Open College, he claims, played an important part in 'selling the idea of returning to serious study, of attracting students to enrol, of counselling and of providing the right atmosphere, group interaction, study skills advice and level of supportive tuition – including postponement of timed examinations, until confidence is gained'. Many adults were 'using' the Open College for their own various purposes and not all of these had been thought of by those responsible for the scheme. There was indeed more 'open' learning than had been expected: he came to the conclusion that the Open College has had 'a different role than that originally envisaged by the founding institutions of higher education' and that 'it is unwise to generalise about the most appropriate learning approach for all adults. Whatever systems are established they will not be perceived as such by adult learners and they will be treated unsystematically.' He found that a high level of satisfaction was gained from what was taken and that for people at the cross-roads, the effect could be a profound and far-reaching one. Like fresh-start students everywhere, there were those who could truly say 'It has changed my life'.

The Open College of the North-West, he suggests, exemplifies 'the organic evolutionary nature of educational experiments that work'

and that open learning systems 'based on institutions and providers can be unnecessarily restrictive'.

In a seminar on Open College Federations in 1983,[7] Keith Percy reiterated these conclusions and affirmed his belief that 'although there has been an increasing success in passing students on to higher education . . . this should not be the only, even the main, concern of the Open College scheme. Relatively few students were going through the whole scheme to take all six units and most moved after only one or two.' His 'minority' view was that the Open Colleges should concentrate on what he regarded as their main strength, that of getting students into Stage A. He also believed that Open Colleges should abolish formal examinations, 'despite the threats to credibility this might cause'.

This view was endorsed by a speaker from one of the Open College constituents who said that Open Colleges were, in fact, part of adult education with a primary aim of confidence-building rather than necessarily leading to higher education. He thought that the Open Colleges were being led not by student needs but by the needs of the further education colleges.

However, adult students, notorious for voting with their feet, make their own assessment and use of the wares that are offered. 90 per cent of the Open College students attending courses in September 1984 had enrolled for the first time in that year and the preceding one. They are 'drop-ins' to, not 'drop-outs' from, the Open College. They have taken what they felt they needed or could get out of the programme offered.[8]

But less emphasis on access to higher education as the goal, more counselling and consideration of alternative outlets and negotiated sequels to the Stage A units might encourage more of the first- and second-year students to stay the course. Paradoxically, this might lead more of them eventually to advanced study whether in higher education or not.

Students compared – Open College and City Lit

It may be interesting and perhaps useful to see how far students recruited over much the same period to two differently conceived and administered courses compare in personal terms despite the geographical dispersion of the Open College and the single institution provision of part-time day and evening Fresh Horizons courses at the City Lit.

Table 7 shows a good deal of similarity except in the proportions of women and men – 80:20 at the City Lit and 58:42 in the Open College. This may reflect greater reliance on evening class recruitment for the Open College. Women are usually freer to attend classes in the day. Although not shown in the Table, school-leaving qualifications of those proceeding to higher education and the subjects studied are also similar.

Table 7 *Comparison of some characteristics of students of the Open College of the North-West and those attending part-time Fresh Horizons courses at the City Lit*

	Open College of the N.W.*		City Lit
	N = 738		166
School-leaving ages	%		%
15 and under	32		34
16	35		27
17	10		14
18 and over	23		25
Employment			
Self and full-time	44		34
Part-time	14		22
Not working	42		44
Motives for enrolling			
Higher education employment	48		57
Personal development etc.	52		43
Ages at enrolment			
30 and under	37	(29 and under)	21
31–45	45	(30–49)	73
46 and over	18	(50 and over)	6
Sex			
Male	42		20
Female	58		80

*Report ref. HB 4.2, School of Education, University of Lancaster, February 1985

Londoners have a wider range of higher education institutions at their elbows and limitations of distance must thwart the desired intentions of some north-westerners. For those who do make it, the degree results are very comparable. Through the two-stage pattern, the Open College students are making a choice as to how far they go. The London students do the same with a shorter and more concentrated course in which the A and B elements of the Open College course are combined. In both cases entry to higher education is only one of the options they will con-

89

sider: they can be chary of a treadmill imposed by a linked higher education institution with its perhaps nervous reaction to deviant entry. Though an Open College system can spread the gospel in a new way – one such has been described as a 'marketing device' in its origins[8] – the structure by which it maintains its separate existence, the setting-up of validating committees and advisory boards, absorb resources that might be better used at the level where students and tutors meet. All who engage in fresh-start work know that it is the teaching, the individual counselling and group interaction that liberate students into new learning. That is where the pinch is felt if resources are diverted to an administrative top.

Action by the ILEA

Education at the immediate post-school level is, above all, examination and grade related. It has its origins in the training of young workers in skills demanded for specific employments. Never reaching more than a third of male and less than a tenth of female entrants, recent events have further eroded it. Unemployment coupled with the removal of Industrial Training Boards have led to the virtual abandonment of apprenticeship.

Over the years, colleges of further education have responded by providing more full-time courses, particularly for girls, in commercial and caring occupations. In addition they have increased the availability of what are essentially school-leaving qualifications – GCE 'O' and 'A' levels – to recent school-leavers and frequently to adults, mainly women.

The mish-mash of Youth Opportunities and Youth Training Schemes that has been offered to 16–17-year-olds has intervened to prevent a clear pattern of post-school work, education or training certainties being offered to them. A generation of 'new young adults', it is claimed, in a report of a conference promoted by the Inner London Education Authority, are 'growing up who do not have a coherent view of the value of education in their lives . . . together with large numbers of older people, they form the constituency for which much of post-school education must provide.'[9]

Linking colleges of further education with local polytechnics, discussions on 'open learning' in this report start from a settled base in 'closed' institutions and move from a programmed outlook to one based on 'needs' as they are uncovered by a widened approach to the whole post-school population. 'The task is nothing less than turning institutions to face needs expressed throughout the post-school population rather than simply concentrating upon a traditional role, e.g. the 16-19 group or non-vocational education for adults.'[10] This para-

graph continues: 'Learning which addresses real need across the broad sweep must be genuinely open, but achieving this requires changes in organisation, content and delivery of what is offered.' There is a useful disclaimer of the need for specifying course entry requirements in terms of examination grades, recommendations for guidance and counselling services and recognition of the importance of experiential learning.

But before long, emphasis begins to rest on creating a 'ladder of opportunity' through 'student progression and transfer', co-ordination of various curricula and 'credit transfer' arrangements within and between the cluster of institutions concerned. To the adult educator, much of the discussion tends again towards the creation of restrictive practices calculated to impose new constraints on experiment and genuine open access.

The Open College of South London

This gypsy's warning is prompted by some personal doubts in relation to Open College systems. ILEA's first venture in open learning strategies was the Open College of South London. There was much to be said for establishing connections and at least awareness of each other's activities, between the four adult education institutes with their branches, six further education colleges, information centres and the Polytechnic of the South Bank that constitute ILEA's provision for post-school education in this district of largely unrelated communities. It was claimed, moreover, that south London, in contrast to areas north of the Thames, had in the Polytechnic, only this single focus to provide a natural back-up for the consortium. Following two years of discussion by a working group, the Open College was established in 1983 with £70,000 from the Polytechnic's funds and a promise of £100,000 annually from the ILEA. This made it possible to house the director and a central staff of four in independent premises provided by the Polytechnic. The spin-off for each of the constituent members was the allocation of a full-time tutor to be responsible for Open College contacts. By September 1984, 2,000 students were said to be registered under the Open College logo which was also an identifying sign for promotional and programme literature issued jointly on behalf of the consortium under the titles of 'Returning to learning' and 'Access courses'. In the main these programmes related to already established courses, the former having been offered by individual institutes under a variety of titles such as 'Return to Study', 'New Horizons' and 'Fresh Start' for some years. Access courses were already well established in colleges of further education under a special programme described below. The aims of the Open

College constitution, which bans formal entry requirements, offers flexible hours and requires involvement of students in the design of schemes of work, certainly seem acceptable enough. When we examine the *method of operation*, however, we begin again to find the injection of standardized procedures, talk of a 'comprehensive system of accreditation, leading eventually to "credit transfer" arrangements'; 'devising and developing specially designed learning programmes' for which external recognition would be sought. One is rather quickly compelled to ask 'How open is open?' A Joint Planning Body, a Director of Studies and a Co-ordinating Committee provide the basis of an assured bureaucratic revising and delaying process.[11]

Promoting fresh-start work at local branch levels of adult institutes, mainly with women, is largely a task for part-time tutors who, incidentally, meet voluntarily and at their own expense to exchange ideas about teaching and guidance strategies. Discussing the Open College scheme with them, it does not seem that there is, as yet, much influence moving up and down the system. To the question 'Do you come across the Access arrangements?' the reply from one such tutor was 'Oh, they are right up at the top: we don't reach up there'. Another tutor doubted whether, if there was to be a further intermediate stage in learning, she could persuade her students to venture across the intervening jungle of roads and streets, for an uncertain advantage.

Resources and their application

Money will be scarcer for the new clusters of adult education institutes and colleges of further and higher education proposed for other parts of London, but the same questions can be raised.

The conclusions arrived at by Keith Percy in relation to the Open College of the North-West, have a continuing validity in this different setting. Much effort and scarce resources can be diverted from the real needs of the 'new young adults' and older people, particularly women, we want to attract into education. These benefit most from generous access to the true resources represented by tutor time and energy. If course-tutors can spend time with insecure and hesitant learners, increasing their confidence and always stretching their limits of knowledge, such students can often leap over many of the fences that teachers used to grading systems put in their way. Every fresh-start initiative should start from the possibility of maximum, not minimum, goals for students. Properly resourced tutors should be able, whatever the status of their institution, to make direct contact with the other contributing parts of the system for the benefit of their students. Resources need to be put into people at the point of immediate student contact, not into the elaboration of procedures for co-operation as such.

The capacity of people starting from a minimum educational base to move directly to good achievement levels in higher education, if given intensive help by sympathetic tutors, is amply demonstrated by examples provided in this book. But others benefit in various ways: each new student finds access to an individually determined learning future.

7
Accent on Access

The 'Access' courses referred to as now incorporated in the Open College projects in London were established as a deliberate attempt at social engineering by the Department of Education and Science under the aegis of its Further Education branch. In August 1978 the Department invited a number of local education authorities to develop what were called 'Special courses for entry into higher education'. As 'Access studies' courses they were established by seven authorities – Avon, Birmingham, Bradford, Haringey, Leicester, ILEA and Manchester. The courses were to be aimed at students 'who have valuable experience but lack the qualifications required' and 'have special needs that cannot be met by existing educational arrangements' in order to fit them to 'undertake responsible careers which bring them into contact with the community' such as, for example, teachers, social workers, youth and community officers. The appeal was directed closely to men and women from ethnic minorities in the hope that their representation within those professions would thereby be increased, as part of a design to combat growing racial tensions and to give opportunities for black people, in particular, to obtain access to positions of community influence and responsibility.[1] Adults from ethnic minorities are not alone, however, in having need for special consideration of this kind. Much professional training is now based on prior attainment of graduate status but entry to higher education is linked to a standard of school-leaving qualifications that many older adults, women in particular, had no opportunity to acquire. Moreover the usual young entrants to universities are drawn in very large measure – 73 per cent – from parents to SEG Classes I and II, indicating very clearly the handicaps of possible candidates from less privileged backgrounds.[2]

Access courses – the Millins Report

Access courses set up under the scheme were based on collaboration between colleges of further education and polytechnics to provide preparatory and linked degree or higher education diploma courses. In one authority, however, Access courses came to be provided within locally accessible community centres of education as opposed to colleges of further education. The first four years of the Project (1979–80 to 1982–3) and the admissions for 1983–4 were monitored and reported on by Ken Millins, a former principal of a college of education.[3] During this period only two of the seven participating authorities, London and Manchester, gave discretionary grants to the recruited full-time students. Twenty-six full-time and ten part-time sessions were organized and in all 1,830 students were registered. Of these the ratio of women to men was 75:25 for the first three years and 64:36 in the last year. The ratio of full-time to part-time students averaged 69 per cent to 31 per cent, emphasizing the greater enthusiasm accorded to the scheme by the two grant-awarding authorities. There were no special grants for the scheme from the DES.

By 1983, the Inner London Education Authority was providing twenty-six full-time courses with discretionary student grants available. The average number of students on the courses already in being was 11.5. If this average was maintained the authority's contribution to the scheme would by 1983 be some 300 places annually. Though the response by members of ethnic minorities to Access courses in London is not shown separately from the national response, the London record of 75 to 80 per cent of the total provision must be strongly reflected in the participation rates. Throughout the period covered by the Millins' survey, these, without distinction of sex, are shown to be: British white, 37 per cent; Caribbean, 51 per cent; Asian, 5 per cent; others 7 per cent.

A considerable effort was put into the project by those directly concerned and the procedure is described most fully for the second student cohort (1980–1). The estimated number of enquiries to the colleges from potential students was 1,500 (they had mounted to 4,300 by 1983). Forms issued in response to enquiries produced 739 applications resulting in 640 interviews mainly undertaken jointly by members of the Access team and of the linking polytechnic. Under half were offered places but the Report does not say how many of these were for full-time study. Of the 264 who actually started Access courses, 161 were judged to have 'passed', the failure and drop-out rate being 35 per cent. Places were taken up at higher education institutions by 151 and on the basis of performance by the only group of these who have so far completed their courses (the original cohort of 1979–80), it is likely that some 60 to 70 per cent will achieve either a degree or a diploma.

The deliberate strategy of inviting applications from men and

women from ethnic minorities, especially those of Caribbean and Asian origin, who, in the nature of things, would not have entered higher education direct from school, was framed with the knowledge that those responding would have little in the way of school-leaving qualifications and would be drawn from lower occupational categories as defined by the Registrar-General.

The Report does not, in fact, analyze the school-leaving qualifications of students on the Access courses, commenting only: 'Though the occasional candidate has been admitted with a cluster of 'O' level qualifications and even one or two 'A' levels as well, these can be regarded as a-typical . . . the overwhelming majority of the UK educated left school with blank or nearly blank examination sheets. Older people, educated overseas, usually have acquired a leaving certificate.' They are described as often having achieved technical qualifications, manual and non-manual, and taken 'taster' studies in adult education.

Comparison – Access and Fresh Horizons

The nearest comparable group in our own survey of fresh-start courses are those attending the London full-time Fresh Horizons course. In accepting applicants for the limited number of places – about twenty annually – that the ILEA has offered since the courses started in 1973, educational and social disadvantage have been high among the criteria applied.

Table 8 *City Lit full-time Fresh Horizons students – school-leaving ages and qualifications*

school-leaving ages					school-leaving qualifications		
	men	women	both		men	women	both
	%	%	%		%	%	%
15 and -	64	37	47	nil	50	39	43
16	32	39	37	CSE/RSA	23	13	17
17	-	21	13	'O' level	18	47	37
18 and +	4	3	3	'A' level	9	-	3

Identification of the socio-economic status of the Access students was made by means of a 15 per cent sample of four cohorts in the years 1979–80 to 1982–3, a total of 201 students. Of these 24 were unemployed and not categorized: the sexes are not distinguished in the figures given. A comparison, as shown below, can be made with 60 men

and 70 women, over 90 per cent of those enrolled in full-time Fresh Horizons courses between 1976–7 and 1982–3.

Table 9 *Comparison of socio-economic groups of Access and Fresh Horizons full-time students*

socio-economic groups	Access courses	full-time Fresh Horizons courses		
	all	all	men	women
	%	%	%	%
professional managerial	-	1	1	-
intermediate	15	12	10	13
skilled non-manual	43	49	27	69
skilled manual	27	17	27	9
partly and unskilled	15	21	35	9

Second chance to fail?

Although the full-time course at the City Lit is not promoted as an 'Access' course, its students have since its beginnings, as we have seen, proved themselves capable of undertaking and succeeding in advanced studies and have used it as a route to higher education and new careers. But of those replying to our questionnaires only half of the men and under three-fifths of the women claimed this as their principal motive at the outset. The confidence and capacities developed during the course and the encouragement of the tutors, however, led a substantial number to upgrade their intentions. But where this happens, as it does, in reverse, students do not need to confess to failure: the course is a 'good' in itself and because of this, 'drop-out' from it is rare, and it continues to be of benefit till its conclusion.

Many of the Access students are described in the Millins Report as having 'an unresolved ambivalence about academic study' and the author continues:

> This would seem to arise from what 'school' continues to mean to them, perhaps at an unconscious level. During those formative years of school education, many performed inadequately, for whatever admixture of reasons. Some felt that their potential was ignored, disbelieved or mischannelled. Some deliberately contracted out, others marked time till marriage. For some from ethnic minorities it was an unhappy, frustrating period in their lives during which they failed to establish satisfying relationships with those in authority – or the latter with them. They left feeling vulnerable in the harsh world

awaiting them. Then Access brings fresh hope – but also, renewed doubts. Will it but repeat those debilitating patterns? Will the sense of academic gaucherie be reinforced by a repetition of failure?

Yet the Report itself, in the presentation of course outcomes, describes Access students as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful', with up to half the men, in some years, and a third of the women, recorded as failed.

Reasons for failure

The report does not examine in any detail the reasons for drop-out and 'failure'. There is some indication of the circumstances in which students were living and studying. Two broad categories are noted: those 'from a stable supportive environment' and 'those from a more precarious background'. The latter were often 'living in cramped, sub-standard quarters with the tensions of multi-occupancy alternatively neglected and exploited by landlords . . . some are forced to take part-time jobs, to work night-shifts on large wards'. One student with three young children is quoted as saying 'when I had to think about money, it was hard to think about work. One tends to take it out on those around you.'

Tutors reported that, in the majority of cases, multiple constraint rather than lack of ability was the crucial factor. Family circumstances, marital difficulties, long hours spent chasing crèche facilities, unsympathetic spouses or partners are all quoted as reasons contributing to the 'success' or 'lack of success' of the students. These are all recognizably factors that affect women rather than men, and women were a large majority of those recruited. Dominant among them, 40 per cent of all students recruited to the courses, were women of Caribbean origin. In the absence of detailed analysis it can only be assumed that, with the heavy responsibilities such women carry for family support, they were very much under pressure while trying to study. Their achievements are all the more remarkable and, where it occurred, their failure or drop-out all the more regrettable.

College attitudes

The report emphasizes the need for child-care, counselling and practical help to be part of the college support system but unfortunately it does not seem that Access studies enjoy much status within colleges of further education. A college principal is quoted as saying 'Of course I'm interested in Access studies, but I'm concerned to keep the whole ship afloat and Access is only one of the planks'.

The report continues: 'not surprisingly, then, given their recency, they appear as rather peripheral phenomena: in some instances almost as extraneous implants within a body corporate which tolerates rather than actively rejects or nourishes them'. Though there are honourable

exceptions they 'tend not to be firmly embedded within the higher reaches of policy making. Predictably some have to make do with cramped facilities and a meagre stock of unattractive learning resources.' These attitudes are carried through to the staffing arrangements: 'Studies are under the overall direction of a course tutor, assisted by subject or issue specialists and supported, as available by college services . . . Virtually all these staff are "part-timers" in that they have other teaching commitments within the institution. The great majority are of junior rank.' They have to weld into a coherent force 'the heterogeneous throng of specialist tutors called in for individual subjects as well as discharging heavy routine administrative duties with no, or only perfunctory assistance and often in cramped quarters. If, as that Principal thought, Access is but a plank of the college ship, it is tempting to remark that some tutors seem to be slaving in the galley.'

But the tutors' 'positive leadership has been a major factor in the unfolding of their students . . . long hours have been devoted to counselling, before, during and after, courses.' Counselling was universally recognized by tutors as important: 'It should under-pin the whole of the course', was one comment. They also learned that 'teaching adults requires specific skills . . . we are not mainly concerned with the acquisition of knowledge but instilling an approach to academic skills'. As adult tutors they were aware of the usefulness of building on students' own experience and came to feel that: 'The idea of experiential learning is the basis from which any teacher on the Access course should start.'

But, inevitably, the examination-based nature of the sponsoring institutions casts its shadow. A suggestion is made that could injure the delicate point of growth where experience and course learning cross-fertilize to create the new organism. 'It would be useful and valuable', says the author of the Report, 'to develop profiles of prior experiential learning, with a possible long-term aim of an accreditation system being developed for part of the course.'

Procedural pressures

The pressures of the Access procedures themselves expose those recruited to a 'second chance to fail'. It is unfortunate that the scheme was conceived in such terms and that those who could not stand the pressures and dropped out and those who did not pass the final assessment were once again dubbed failures. Direct linking with specific courses left no chance for success lying outside a predetermined end, although in practice this bleak outlook was mitigated for some people by the help afforded by concerned tutors in finding higher education places outside the prescribed links.

The Report recognizes the problem when it notes that 'the in-built contractual element which enables successful students to enter a higher

89

education course was seen as a source of security, particularly at the present time of financial cut-back and strong competition for places' but, it adds, 'it was, however, felt to be inflexible for the minority who wanted to change direction during an Access course'.

It is well-recognized by adult educators, particularly those teaching on fresh-start courses, that the learning process is, and must be thought of, as developmental. There is frequently an observable 'take-off' point when a student begins to gather the momentum that will achieve an end not at all envisaged at the outset. That is when encouragement is most beneficial: the decision process about how far to go is also at work. If the intended outcome of the course is closely predetermined and subject to outside constraints that raise doubts in students' minds and encourage them to drop out, they lose such value as they might have derived from finishing the course. Access courses are in practice being directed towards ever more closely predetermined outcomes. Although the Millins Report claims that the key factor is 'the quality of the impetus which it gives towards individual growth, irrespective of community benefits', it welcomes the growing links with closely defined polytechnic courses tied to a commitment to study domestic science, town planning, business studies and law. Furthermore, the linked 'lower stage' return to study courses at London adult institutes are being tied to such offerings as 'Returning to learning in Food Studies'; 'Returning to learning in Fashion'. The commendable purpose behind these moves is no doubt to extend the learning experience of women attending traditional dressmaking and cookery classes, but room should be left for them to get out of the kitchen if they see a door opening into another world. Otherwise one may be led to suspect that what is really in question is finding students for classes rather than widening choices and opportunities for them.

There is undoubtedly a need for a large extension of full-time courses enabling women and men, whatever their country of origin or ethnicity, to achieve their learning potential. Without advertising (and special advertising, never generously financed, is one of the casualties of adult education cuts), over eighty hard-to-reject applications are received at the City Lit early each year, for the twenty full-time places available.

We cannot but feel that to tie students, at the outset of a profound and potentially life-changing experience, to a predetermined outcome, is to expose them to risks of disappointment, loss and a confirmation of failure.

Growth in Access provision

Such hesitations about the Access approach for adults are considerably

enhanced by a countrywide increase in the number of courses so described on offer. A recent survey of 'Access' courses in England[4] gives details of ninety-nine courses (other than those at the long-term residential colleges) that they have identified as 'Access', including the courses already discussed. Also included are the Fresh Horizons and Fresh Start courses in London and Richmond described earlier. These are two of the group of four noted as existing before 1978.

The total of forty-two full-time and fifty-seven part-time courses listed does not include those provided by the separate colleges that are members of the Open College Federation of the North-West. There are some omissions but they probably derive more from failure by promoters to supply information than from failure by the editors, who are to be congratulated on their collection and presentation of the material. Another useful source of information is the republished *Second Chances*[5] by Andrew Pates and Martin Good which fills out the picture with other related courses and material.

Although aspects of some of the provision now being made can be criticized, there has undoubtedly been considerable growth, particularly since 1982, in courses designed to enable students to enter education at higher levels while at the same time opening new and enjoyable areas of learning and the methods of acquiring it.

It is difficult to estimate at all accurately the numbers involved and their distribution among providing institutions. Many are hidden within the total numbers given for consortia but in round figures a capacity of 7,000 may be a reasonable guess. Not all will be in higher education access-directed courses and the count may include many students moving over from GCE or other examination preparation classes or amount to a change of use of the institution. But it is certainly a sign of movement of purpose within the participating institutions. The subject range is strong on study and communication skills with numeracy and computer competence as supporting basics. Sociology, economics, history, psychology are preferred subjects but special courses of mathematics and science access studies are listed. On the whole, the range of conceptual subjects is very much what is to be expected for concerned adults wishing to understand more about how society and people tick while at the same time looking closely at their own situation and prospects in an uncertain world. Many of the listed courses have the declared aim of recruitment from ethnic minorities. One college describes its offered course as a preparatory BA (Social Science) 'intended for students who generally did not derive full benefit from their secondary education and for students from ethnic minority groups whose education may have been limited because of linguistic or cultural difficulties'.

Another course is aimed at 'students wishing to re-enter education for vocational or personal development, who may have had a substantial

break from study and could benefit from a refresher course' and continues 'people who have joined such courses in the past include women whose children have reached school age, single parents, unemployed adults and people who wish to change direction in the job market'. It is very much a fresh-start clientele that it is aimed at and the invitation is issued in embracing terms. All the publicity for courses stresses that there are no formal qualifications for entry but the partnering institutions cast their shadows. Preliminary interviews are often conducted by staffs of both Access and higher education courses so that some 'returners' will risk being turned down at the start as being unlikely to finish up in the designed slot. This is a pity since some students, even had they not succeeded, might have had the chance of the guided educational lift they were seeking.

Some twenty of the courses mention, in addition to interview, such hurdles as 'a general reasoning test'; 'evidence of recent study'; 'tests in English, numeracy and conceptual skills'; 'preference if applicant has studied to 'O' level'. In one instance, applicants would be requested to supply a reference, attend an extended interview and undergo diagnostic tests, before acceptance. But at least one course organizer was bold enough to put her faith in 'enthusiasm, interest and life experience' as the qualifying criteria for admission.

The names given to courses often declare their provenance: apart from a few generalized invitations to 'come in' such as 'Gateway' and 'Threshold', there are specific descriptions of destinations: 'Higher education preparatory course'; University preparatory course'; 'Alternative to "A" levels'.

A similar determinism marks progress and outcomes. Assessment during and at the end of courses may be decided between tutors and external examiners, fifty-fifty, and examinations show a final validating caution on the part of many organizers with pass or fail decisions marking yet another lost attempt to 'start again' for those to whom certificates are denied. In contrast, the City Lit courses whose students have been described earlier, are described in the survey as 'not formally assessed and course work is not formally graded but detailed references are available to help to launch students'.

As noted previously, the outcome for the 'failed' access students may not be so bleak as might be suggested by these apparent rigidities of some courses. Kindly and concerned tutors will suggest other paths: some students will have gained enough from the exercise to try for promotion or for new jobs. Others will have widened their range of interests to enquire more closely into the state of the world around them. It is a pity that such an outcome as a desirable outlet from the course is not directly indicated at the beginning.

The traditions of the offering institutions are strongly at work in all

this. Apparently seven colleges of higher education or polytechnics are arranging entry to their own institutions via Access courses. The remaining eighty-odd, apart from four adult education colleges, are all colleges of further education. These carry through into these new ventures their long-established habits of working in a graded progression through set syllabuses laid down by external boards. These may be necessary stepping stones for the skills training of late adolescents but they deny to adults the recognition of life and work experience and their accumulated store of self-won knowledge in mature years. This is particularly so in the case of women whose search for a fresh start, as we have seen, very commonly comes after rearing children with all that this implies in increased social awareness, often unrecognized by themselves until placed in a framework of developmental learning. Writing of a selection process for adults, the ILEA's Inspectors, in their report on the authority's Access courses, note 'the uncertainties which are inherent in even the most carefully designed and executed selection procedures and reaffirm . . . the capacity of adult learners rapidly to gain confidence in a supportive environment and to master essential skills in familiar, or long forgotten, learning processes'.

It is probable that fewer women have access to the expanded number of full-time courses. Many unemployed male students can apparently take part in them without losing unemployment benefit under the twenty-one hour rule. Most women 'returners' from the home environment do not have this entitlement and, in many instances, will also be funding course fees out of the house-keeping purse. It is certain that constantly rising fees coupled with increasing pressure on low budgets must contribute powerfully to restriction of recruitment to all kinds of 'second chance' courses, particularly among women.

8
'Higher' and 'Further'

Educational institutions are conservative bodies. They may have their origins in the perceived needs of a society at any one time and receive modifications and accretions as society changes but they have a vested interest in the *status quo* arising from a complex of reasons that include establishment, funding, plant and their founding philosophy. Reciprocally, they help to mould the pattern of major elements in the society of which they are part and this pattern is thereby slow to change.

The earlier chapters of this book have described a limited but growing volume of work that has involved three types of educational institutions, sometimes acting together but mostly making contact with each other at the fringes of their main areas of interest. Fresh-start courses, as we have described them, emerged as initiatives of adult education centres and were later adopted, in somewhat different guises, by colleges of further education and linked, through contact or collaboration, with institutions of higher education – universities, polytechnics and colleges of higher education who may themselves provide other fresh-start variants suited to their own strategies. Each type of institution seeks to consolidate its own status, image and practice in making a collaborative response.

Higher education

Over the period covered by this study, institutions of higher education have had to accept an increasing awareness and resentment by adults of their exclusion from the social and economic benefits of extended education. The steady rise in numbers of school-leavers entering higher education, and the extension of graduate entry to an increasing number

of professions, both established and new, have had the effect of diminishing the value of such qualifications as were wholly acceptable when the bulk of the practitioners were trained. New entry requirements and qualifying standards place older people at a disadvantage, particularly when changing jobs or, as is so often the case with women, when re-entering employment after a break. The disadvantage is not only in relation to employment but also, as our respondents have often affirmed, in loss of self-esteem and assurance as younger colleagues display a wider range of reference. There is abundant testimony, too, that the fresh-start experience itself can take those who left secondary school indifferent to continuing education, across the threshold with a new intellectual excitement that demands engagement in study at the highest level.

Grants for fees and maintenance, though the scale demands sacrifice from established wage-earners, make higher education on a full-time basis possible. For the unwaged wife, moreover, although the husband's income determines its level, there is the unusual satisfaction of having at least some monetary recognition for effort. It is evident that enhanced earning, prestige and learning satisfaction provided by university courses, together with the assurance of at least some financial recognition, tend to skew the outcomes for fresh-start students in the direction of degree-level higher education. This means that more of them will accept the challenge: the results, as shown in Tables 4 and 5, suggest that, but for the absence of earlier opportunities, many of them might have succeeded similarly as school-leavers.

The absence of grants for substantial education or training courses, other than degree courses at universities and polytechnics, does however reduce the range of possibilities of follow-up for fresh-start students. Local education authorities have power to make discretionary grants in such cases but the continuous pressure on them to reduce spending and the inevitable emphasis on their duties to provide for compulsory education make for a very uncertain exercise of such optional powers.

The contribution of the MSC is dictated by the over-riding philosophy of market-identification and pinpointing of training for specific purposes, even though they themselves claim that 'a comprehensive strategy should not focus simply on narrowly defined economic objectives. Training and education must equip individuals with the general competence and capacity for personal development that will allow them to cope with change . . . essential under-pinning for retraining to meet economic objectives'.[1] MSC provision, in practice, is short-stringed, erratic and subject to changes of mood.[2] It can be made use of but offers little of a settled base of competence to the emerging fresh-start student or those providing for her. Women as a class are marginalized

along with 'ethnic minorities and disabled people with some disadvantage in the labour market'.[3]

Possibilities and limitations

These factors place a heavy responsibility on the universities and other institutions of higher education. The range of degree courses, particularly in polytechnics, now includes many that were formerly offered only at diploma or certificate level in the arts, teaching, social work, and health service occupations.

There is an uneasy relationship between the requirements to provide skills training and promote scientific exploration and research on the one hand and the need to accommodate the 'new' student who does not bring the prepared package of purported competence as represented by the 'O' and 'A' levels of the school programme. Moreover universities, especially, have a tradition of restrictive practices designed to sift out those entrants who might be thought to water down their main purposes as conceived by academic staff. Women had to fight their way in, in the first place, and can still on occasion be excluded from or deterred from taking courses for reasons other than their own competence.[4] Among the older graduates of Birkbeck College, a unit of the University of London founded to provide part-time courses for the specific benefit of working people, are some who were not deterred by the requirement that they should have a qualification in Latin, irrespective of its utility for their course, and who spent much time and effort acquiring it. Although a standard requirement of the Regulations of the University until 1950–1, in the next year it vanished without trace or explanation.[5] What would seem to be a curious reversion exists in the Regulations relating to mature entry of the University of Lancaster, where it is stated that an 'A' level more than five years old is excluded as a qualification for entry. One may wonder how many senior members of the university could muster an acceptable qualification of academic competence less than five years old!

The period covered by this study is one in which fresh-start students were securing recognition in their own right and in which tutors made great efforts to extend contact on their behalf with admissions tutors of colleges and polytechnics. A residential seminar at Wye College as part of the London Extra-Mural Department Summer School in 1979, considered the matter among others and made suggestions in what was issued as 'The Wye Declaration'. A useful meeting was subsequently arranged by the Extra-Mural Director, Professor Brian Groombridge, that brought together fresh-start tutors and admissions tutors from thirteen of the constituent colleges of the University. Phoebe Lambert, then Fresh Horizons Tutor-Organizer at the City Lit, reported that of 404 students completing courses in the years 1975–8, 155 went to

polytechnics and colleges of higher education and 58 to universities. Of the latter, 28 went to eight of the constituent colleges of the University of London. In the present study, covering the years 1976–82, only two more have been added to the list of London colleges accepting Fresh Horizons students. Over the whole period from 1975 to 1982, the roll of accepting institutions includes: ten colleges of the University of London; fourteen other universities; thirteen polytechnics and colleges of higher education.

The conclusion of the discussion at the 1979 meeting with admissions tutors was that, 'perhaps fresh-start providers should seek to make contacts with particular schools or institutes rather than with the university as a whole' – a time-consuming element in the organization of fresh-start courses if each student's access to higher education has to be negotiated separately from an insecure base. It would certainly help if a general seal of approval in principle were issued to all constituents by the University. What has happened is that over the years students have established rights of entry through their achievements and the tireless efforts of their tutors.

Fresh Horizons students are recruited from the whole of the central and greater London area and travel is possible to the wide scatter of higher education outlets by Underground and bus as well as by private transport. Richmond students, with few exceptions, are drawn from a radius of about three miles from the Adult College. They have been shown to be more likely to have young children and though they are fortunate in having local access to several colleges of higher education and a polytechnic, only two institutions have consistently adopted an open admissions policy, despite the regularly good final results obtained by accepted students as shown in Table 5. Richmond students are also more likely to look for part-time courses of which only two are available locally, and one of those only recently.

Extension of access

Undoubtedly, the enthusiasm of institutions of higher education tends to ebb and flow with the rise and fall of the 18-year-old school-leaving population. From 3.7 million in 1982, the 16–19-year-olds will decrease to 2.6 million in 1994. Anticipatory action can be seen in experiments with improved access for mature entrants. The CNAA recorded its approval of non-standard entry in its statement *Extension of Access to Higher Education* in 1980. While making it clear that it is 'certainly not wishing to encourage any lowering of entry standards', it is emphatic that institutions have 'discretion to admit mature students without formal qualifications'.

The statement observed, 'the key-point is that all applicants should be judged on their individual merits in the light of their total educa-

tional background and experience in relation to the demands of the particular course for which they have applied' and that 'experience has shown that applicants with non-standard qualifications are capable of achieving success on first degree and Dip HE courses without jeopardising the final standard of the awards in question'. Although the proportion of non-standard entrants varies between subjects – more in the humanities, many fewer in the sciences – an over-all figure of 4.5 per cent seems to have been established.

Seeking the reasons for this small number, various suggestions emerged from a research project initiated by the CNAA.[6] In discussing criteria and procedures for acceptance of older, non-qualified students, some 100 tutors in twenty-four institutions were interviewed. The methods used were so varied even within different departments of one institution, that it was found impossible to tabulate them. Institutions feared for the validation of their courses if the number of non-standard entrants was too large.

> Concern for academic standards; perceptions of the nature of academic study; variously, even vicariously gathered impressions of the capabilities of adults as learners; tutors' backgrounds and personal experience; a case of a non-standard entrant who failed – many comments revealed that factors such as these can make tutors reluctant to accept non-standard entry. And that reluctance invariably connects with a concern that non-standard entrants would be ill-served if they were to fall into academic difficulties later, through 'finding the going too hard' or an inability to cope with exams.

The Lindop Report

Such timidity is only likely to be increased by the warning of the Lindop Committee[7] in regard to the direct links set up with Access courses viz:

> As regards Access courses intended to prepare for entry to degree courses, students lacking in minimum entry qualifications normally required, we believe institutions should bear in mind the possible dangers involved in themselves organising or helping to organise such courses with a view to admitting students from them to their own degree courses . . . (this) can result in forming relationships and understandings which lead to students from the Access courses being accepted for degree courses even if they lack the ability to reach degree standard. Institutions must avoid giving Access students any reason to suppose they are automatically assured of places on degree courses. As a general principle an Access course should not be designed with a special institution or course in mind.

It was further recommended that 'every institution should designate a

member of staff for overseeing procedures for assessing "unqualified" applicants throughout the institution'. It was also emphasized that 'institutions should not accept too high a proportion of mature students and/or students lacking normal minimum qualifications for degree courses not specifically designed for them. Such students may lack the technical skills for effective study at degree level.'

Criteria and procedures established under such a regime could very well act against the best interests of suitable entrants, reinforcing, as they do, the already built-in fears of the higher education establishment. It is perhaps good policy, therefore, for fresh-start students to make use of a variety of possible openings and for their tutors to establish links that will help to ensure some uniformity of entry procedures. The Diploma in Higher Education courses have proved good testing grounds when doubts exist, on the part of either students or tutors, as to whether the full academic rigour is likely to prove burdensome. As this is not an 'either/or' choice, but allows for a successful two-year experience with a possible third year for full graduation, it has proved a useful *via media* with honour satisfied on both sides.

Norman Evans, in the paper already quoted,[8] sees the institutions most successful in attracting, keeping and satisfying older students, as those where 'admissions procedures are seen as the beginning of a continuous service to older students which gives them support, encouragement and advice, right through to the end of their course'. The experience of fresh-start students who entered higher education bears this out. The successful completion of degree courses by so many of them, already described, illustrates the willingness of institutions to meet their needs and the adaptability of the students to the mysteries of college life. The institutions that help the students to keep going, the course-tutors who suggest strategies for coping, who can recommend a year off to overcome a major bereavement trauma or suggest a transfer to part-time attendance, are those that establish an accord with mature students and success in attracting them. A comforting outcome of a welcoming policy for mature students is that they find companions from other fresh-start years and courses to prevent the isolation felt in some degree by students of all ages entering the strange world of academe for the first time. The point is clearly made by the woman who wrote: 'When I started at college last year, there were some of my Fresh Start year in their final year and they were very encouraging and helpful. There is also someone from Fresh Start in my year and two Richmond fresh-starters both gained upper-seconds, last year.'

Unknown possibilities

The greater part of our respondents had little previous knowledge of higher education: at school many of them had been outside the academi-

cally chosen few whose future was to be laid out before them in the sixth form and they had little guidance from earlier family and social experience. One man who could be said to have come in not merely from the cold but from the arctic, wrote:

> 'I didn't know what "academic" meant when I started the course . . . The course which I am now doing (a social science degree) was something I didn't know existed. My experience of the City Lit was my first experience of "education" and, as I became aware that I was doing it there I realised I could do it elsewhere. I really didn't have any idea about education until I got started. The door into education was the hardest part to attain.'

Even a student with some fore-knowledge who had achieved two 'A' levels – Law and English – and extra 'O' levels as an adult student, before taking the Fresh Horizons part-time day course, could nevertheless find herself at sea in the university college whose first-year exams she failed.

> 'The classes were enormous, 80–100 students, with no time for questions or discussion during lectures. Tutorial groups, 8–16 students, were too large. I was afraid of asking questions because I did not want to waste the other students' time over a point they had grasped. They were all aged 19–early 20s so it was very difficult for me to make any real friends. The library was like a cocktail party with students talking all the time so the time between lectures when I should have been working, I couldn't.'

Her difficulties were compounded by a long day away from her children and apparent failure to get her distress signals through to her personal tutor.

But as a Richmond student wrote: 'Students should be made aware that studying full-time will be very time-consuming and home and family will be affected.' For most family women this is the biggest hazard to be faced as they come to a decision to enter full-time education. As one of our respondents wrote: 'I have the full support of family, particularly my husband. I meet many at college who have not this support and it seems to make a difference in ability to cope and freedom to read at all times.'

These are not the sorts of problems that personal tutors or student counsellors on conventional university campuses are geared to meeting but if mature women are going to form more of the total student intake, their difficulties are as much a part of the background to serious study as are the growing-pains of the late adolescent young. It is perhaps not surprising that the fresh-start introduction to new learning set up, for some people, an expectation that was not satisfied in the more formal,

impersonal world of higher education. Though fresh-start tutors tried to warn and prepare students, there was sometimes disappointment in finding that the excitement of intellectual awakening did not always persist in the new setting, e.g. 'I never experienced in one single day during the three years of my degree course, the pleasu.e and excitement of being part of that small group of Fresh Horizons. Neither did I feel that FH sense of commitment both to subject and students on the part of the teaching staff', wrote one respondent.

That such a response is indicative of an attitude to the teaching function in some higher education circles cannot be gainsaid. It is pleasant as a contrasting view to be able to quote from a Richmond student attending another college, who had left school at 16 with three 'O' levels only, and wrote, towards the end of her degree studies: 'Two and a half years of bliss – although I'm in water up to my nostrils most of the time.' And even a student who dropped out of her degree course after a year, wrote: 'Altho' I have no degree it has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.'

The case for part-time

More might be happier and better able to cope in difficult circumstances if there were more part-time degree courses and better designed ones than those, as one student put it, that are 'part-time courses that proved to be no more than full-time ones taken part-time'. A woman who realized she had made a wrong decision and moved from a full-time course in one polytechnic to a part-time one in another designed as such, wrote that the move had been 'a great success. It has the benefit of the "support" system that was an integral part of Fresh Horizons.'

Some of the questionnaire respondents chose to embark on Open University courses and a number reached graduate and honours standards. There are obvious advantages for mobile working women and men as well as for the spouses of those who are mobile, in settling for the Open University outlet. Not all can accept the solitary student life that accompanies such a decision and women wanting to escape from secluded home conditions often need the stimulus of a more personal contact than the Open University can provide. Greater portability of credits between the Open University and other institutions of higher education would be of benefit in both directions. None of our respondents said they had to discontinue a degree course because of a husband's employment transfer to another area but it was a factor for some in deciding not to apply for one or settling for the Open University.

An ACACE paper of 1979[9] notes that:

> Difficulties arise with locally validated examinations such as a college diploma or a university degree. Each institution's course is sep-

arately devised and taught, so that entry mid-way through requires an individual assessment of how far the early ground of the course has been covered already. On these and similar grounds there has been much resistance to the idea of transferable credit between courses. Not only is such a scheme thought to be impracticable; it is also thought to infringe academic autonomy if work done elsewhere at a previous date should seem to confer a *right* of admission.

At least more of an attempt might be made!

But there is also a financial deterrent for students needing facilities for part-time study: part-time undergraduate students do not qualify for mandatory grants and must pay their tuition and examination fees and costs of travel, books etc. covered by awards to full-time students, from their own pockets. As Malcolm Tight has noted:

> These expenses are considerable and can act as a powerful disincentive to enrolment and to the continuation of a course when difficulties are encountered. Yet, unlike full-time students, part-timers normally continue to contribute to the economy through their employment during the period of their studies and meet their educational expenses from taxed income.

Emphasizing that there is clearly a strong case for making some form of financial assistance more readily available for part-time students to remove this inequity, he continues:

> This might take the form of mandatory awards to allow full-time study in the final year of part-time first degree courses, or the payment of fees only, throughout the course. There might eventually be introduced a general entitlement to financial aid for higher education, with full-time and part-time students on the same courses receiving equivalent assistance over the period of their studies (though not necessarily at the same level or in the same form as currently given to full-time home students). There is a pressing need to maintain the policy of keeping part-time fees at a reasonable level: this is endangered by the recent ill-considered proposals from the University Grants Committee for the introduction of pro rata rates.[10]

Mature entrants – 1985 and after

In 1983, the DES produced a review of provision for higher education beyond 1985-6,[11] showing the effects of the declining numbers of potential normal-age entrants because of the rapid decline in annual numbers of births from the peak of nearly 900,000 in 1964 to a low of well under 600,000 in 1976. The number of 18–19-year-olds will reach its lowest point about 1994–5 with some recovery thereafter. Changes

in social class composition and length of school-life may modify projections derived from the age-group numbers but the effect is not likely to be large. Figures were also produced for estimated numbers of 'mature' entrants, i.e. persons over 21 years of age.

Criticisms of assumptions on which these projections were based resulted in a further paper from the DES in July 1984 [12] in which it is recognized that the earlier figures perhaps underestimated, in particular, the likely demand for 'full-time and sandwich places' from 'mature home entrants'. The revised figures for mature entry are related to population projections for the age-groups 21–4 and 25-34 only, but it may be worth noting that a good third of the women in our study known to have gone on to full-time degree-level higher education were above age 34. An analysis of mature student entrants to the University of Lancaster in the years 1978-80[13] shows that over one-quarter of the 137 women included were aged 35 or more with one in six of them 40 or over. These numbers are, of course, small in relation to the total numbers of mature entrants but any substantial increase in the provision of fresh-start courses would contribute to taking up the slack in projected numbers of higher education entrants after the end of the present decade – provided, of course, that they are encouraged and actively assisted to do so.

Lest the limitation to age 34 in the DES projection be accepted uncritically as a cut-off point, it should be remembered that economic activity by women is rising fast at that age and after. Martin and Roberts[14] noted that: 'Apart from women in their teens, those in their 40s had the highest activity rate of all women – 78 per cent.' This declined slowly to 73 per cent in the early 50s and was still 58 per cent in their late 50s.

From the present study it is evident that women, with the advantage of higher qualifications, were able to start satisfying work in their late 40s and 50s. One wrote:

> 'Because of family circumstances arising as a result of the war, I was unable to go on with further education . . . I had not been aware of how deeply buried this disappointment was until, in a direct progression from the Fresh Start course at Richmond, I graduated with an upper second degree . . . It has enabled me, now aged 51, to *start* a career for which I think I am well suited, lecturing/teaching adult students . . . I had not worked since my third child's birth and I really think I believed any truly interesting work was a matter of my past. Not so! Here I am, raring to go'.

Colleges of further education

The institutions under discussion so far have been those providing

essentially degree-level higher education – primarily universities and polytechnics. But falling numbers are also a growing cause for concern within the colleges of further education, the main resort of immediate post-school part-time and full-time students, for training and non-advanced higher education. Even while the 16–19s, the product of the 'baby boom', have been reaching their post-war – indeed their all-time – peak, the colleges have had problems. Very soon, their potential numbers, on the basis of present admission policies will shrink. Moreover, the scope of their work has already been squeezed by unemployment: only 20 per cent of 16-year-olds entered employment in 1984 compared with 60 per cent ten years earlier. More stayed on at school and more, particularly girls, went on to full-time further education courses – in all, 40 per cent of the 16-year-old boys and 50 per cent of the same age girls opted for full-time education. But there was a heavy loss of part-time students among the boys, as jobs disappeared and with them the opportunity for day-release education and training. The YTS (Youth Training Scheme), an alternative offering for the 16-year-olds that is being extended to include the 17-year-olds, makes a different and more restricted use of the colleges. With the schools holding on to their 16-year-olds for a further year or so and with higher levels of full-time and part-time technical and professional training more in the province of the polytechnics, the colleges of further education have problems of readjustment that vary very much between individual areas and institutions. Courses for adults have lived uneasily within the mixture of programmes that have constituted the normal work of the colleges. GCE 'O' and 'A' levels, offered separately for adults or equally available to them and to school-leavers having another try, have been a regular offering. But adults, particularly women, seeking satisfaction for their own learning needs in a flexible way have not generally been catered for.

Locating such courses in her survey of 'Bridging' courses was found by Sheila Stoney 'to be no easy matter'; the courses were often run 'spasmodically' and 'were particularly subject to closure, often did not appear in the main college prospectus' and 'neither college switchboards nor Registrar's departments were found to be particularly useful when a general enquiry about bridging course provision was directed towards them'.[15] This is not surprising, as many of the mainly part-time tutors who initiated and sustained them found they were very marginal to the centrally perceived nature of the college. They were not productive of the 'points' that in aggregate contributed to the college's status and to the grading of full-time posts and they were outside its examination-directed structure. Nor did they fit in to the college environment: 'The new adult student', Sheila Stoney notes, 'was often faced with a large entrance hall, often filled with youngsters and little indication as to where to go.'[16]

A tutor's experience

A personal communication illustrates how alien the concept of fresh start was to the controllers of policy and administration in one college:

> 'Starting a fresh-start course in this college of further education was very difficult. It came about because a group of my NOW (New Opportunities for Women) students, who completed their course just before Easter, had become enthusiastic about studying and were wondering what they should do when the course finished . . . I had one day a week free so dreamt up a course based on your model to fit into that day. It consisted of English, communication and study skills for one hour, maths, sociology and psychology for one hour each. We were not allowed any counselling time. I always had lunch with the students and held an informal tutorial at the same time. There was a certain amount of opposition amongst the college hierarchy and when it looked as though it might not run, a number of NOW students, putting their assertiveness training into practice, cornered the Vice-Principal and demanded their rights as ratepayers! I was not a party to this (I had no idea that they even knew who the Vice-Principal was), but I was hauled over the coals as a result. The hierarchy agreed to the course, finally, but maintained it should pay for itself and therefore charged more for it than almost all other college courses. The first time it ran we had twenty-one students, regardless of the high costs, and without the usual fee discounts being allowed, about which there was another row.'

The continuance of this course was threatened by poor publicity: 'It was doing my own publicity that really got me into trouble with the authorities. I got so fed-up waiting for them to do it.'

About another college where the same informant worked, she writes:

> 'My time was not quite so bad, though even there I was alternatively encouraged and discouraged by my head of department, depending on the numbers of 16–19s in the college at any one time. It seems that in an FE college this is quite likely to be the case since that age-group is their bread and butter and adults are very much on the periphery, especially in the present climate.'

Changing the focus

Has the 'climate' undergone a major change and is the future outlook for the colleges so uncertain that such an experience, by no means uncommon in the past, would no longer be entertained? A push from within Elizabeth House might at least help to prevent it and something of the kind is recently discernible. Picking up the complaints that have been coming increasingly loud and clear from women tutors and stu-

dents within the colleges, a Policy Document, 'Changing the Focus: Women and Further Education' was issued in 1985 by the Further Education Unit housed by the Department of Education and Science. Basing itself on criticisms and recommendations in the Report of the Women's National Commission prepared for 'The End of Decade for Women Conference' in 1985,[17] the document examined the ways in which colleges of further education need to change their practices to widen the scope of opportunities for girls and women. It states emphatically: 'In some further education institutions and in certain areas of work, women are hardly apparent. Those female students who find themselves in an FE college are likely to be part of an establishment organised by men for men, often with a mono-cultural ethos.'

Looking at the development of provision for women returners, staff are recommended to think of a 'negotiated/learner-centred curriculum, designed around clearly-stated aims and objectives' as 'more appropriate than a rigid, pre-determined syllabus which may carry a strongly male bias'. It is also suggested that 'Women's studies modules are an appropriate consciousness-raising element where women can locate their experience in a broad, historical social and political perspective. Women's experience can acquire new legitimacy and value as a source of reflection, learning and subsequent progression.' As parts of a flexible learning pattern, 'sufficient and specialized individual counselling and support' and 'career and life-planning activity' are affirmed. New management models to provide for smaller units would help this development and also contribute to giving women – 'invisible' at management level – in further education colleges, 'experience and confidence to apply for more senior positions'.

Limits of 'Access'

The considerable development of Access courses as part of further education since 1982 has already been discussed. There are many reasons why these would not measure up to the criteria of the Policy Document set out above as changing the focus on women. Entry tests, assessment by examinations and grading, measurement of success by special certification are all far from the flexible learning patterns advocated as most beneficial for women returners, or indeed for most adults. Four out of every six courses are full-time without provision for grant-aid other than the concession that students receiving unemployment benefit are not penalized as having rendered themselves unavailable for work if weekly hours of college attendance do not exceed twenty-one. As previously noted, women returners do not often qualify for unemployment benefit since they rarely start fresh-start courses with a recent history of full-time work. Married women with personal resources limited

to the margins of the house-keeping purse face the same problems as always of how to finance their emergence into independence.

The dominant pattern of full-time courses is of greater benefit to college organization and staffing than to a potential female student body for whom a part-time re-entry to study is most appealing. Nor is the common pattern of course direction likely to encourage them. Only twenty-eight of the hundred course-leaders named in the list of *Access courses in England* previously mentioned[18] are women – and fewer than that number if the small number of adult education centres involved are excluded. Women are rarely mentioned as a particular target group: there is, in fact, little to suggest that many of the institutions seeking new 'mature' students and devising courses for them have shifted in their built-in male stance.

9
'Adult' and 'continuing' for the class of women

The aim of the needlework teaching in elementary schools should be to fit the girls for the ordinary duties of a housewife. The object of the mother of a family is to turn out as quickly as possible, garments of the maximum amount of wear. For this purpose she needs strong sewing but not fine sewing . . . The ideal is, therefore, that the child should, during her school career, have cut out, fixed and made for her own use as many garments as possible, so far as is consistent with good work and the other demands of the curriculum.

(*LCC Handbook of Classes for Teachers*, 1914–15, p. 22, Needlework)

It (needlework) tames boisterous natures. Interest the roughest girl in a bit of needlework and she will sit still for hours.

(Amy H. Smith, *Needlework for Student Teachers*, 1914, Introduction by Lady Wolverton)

When I was young it was not thought proper for young ladies to study very conspicuously; and especially with pen in hand. Young ladies (at least in provincial towns) were expected to sit down in the parlour to sew – during which reading aloud was permitted – or to practise their music; but so as to be fit to receive callers, without any sign of blue-stockingism which could be reported abroad. Jane Austen herself, the Queen of novelists, the immortal creator of Anne Elliott, Mr Knightley and a score or two more of unrivalled intimate friends of the whole public, was compelled by the feelings of her family to cover up her manuscripts with a large piece of muslin, kept on the table for the purpose, whenever any genteel people came in. So it was with other young ladies, for some time after Jane Austen

was in her grave: and thus my first studies in philosophy were carried on with great care and reserve. I was at the work table regularly after breakfast – making my own clothes, or the shirts of the household, or about some fancy work . . . and if I ever shut myself up in my own room for an hour of solitude I knew it was at the risk of being sent for to join the sewing circle.

(Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, p. 100, Virago, 1983)

It could be said that the last institutional resting-places of these approved female occupations are the community colleges, evening institutes and centres administered by local education authorities, whose users represent the largest body of adult education participants. Schools may absorb sewing and woodwork into unisex craft, design and technology but within the authorities' programmes of adult classes, put out each Autumn, the Victorian lady's leisure-time accomplishments with needle and thread figure prominently and there is still the whiff of what was properly to be learnt by girls in nineteenth-century elementary schools.

This is not to deny the artistry that can be achieved within the scope of women's crafts or the design ability called forth in the dressmaking, soft furnishing and associated programmes. There will be women – and men – who will want to work with the materials that have been part of women's way of life over the centuries. Even at the basic level, ready-made, easy care clothing and easy-to-prepare food do not absolve either men or women from the need to be able to thread a needle or boil the proverbial egg. But it is indisputable that this is held to be far more the need of women than of men. Women, as they withdraw from paid employment to become homemakers and mothers, have to learn new skills for the new role and to adapt those already acquired much more than do men as fathers. So, in that phase of their lives there is an understandable demand, from women using the adult education service, for cookery, homecrafts, child-care and rearing programmes.

But for most women, the period in which the domestic role is uppermost is now short. Cookery may then be taken up in a variety of more exotic or specialized forms and needlecraft revive the embroidery and tapestry of an earlier leisured class. But there is a strong suggestion that men, having the major directing roles in adult education, emphasize consciously or unconsciously the domestic sphere in planning for women and limit the range and scope of what is offered to them to fit into the picture of the little woman at home.

An ILEA report

Criticism on these lines was expressed in a report produced by the

Inner London Education Authority in 1984.[1] This drew heavily on the experience of women field-workers in adult education and sought 'to highlight some of the conditions, practices, attitudes and organisational arrangements' which seemed 'to act against the interests of women in adult education' and result in sex stereotyping that it was felt inhibited development.

Asking why women take up adult education – and the majority of adult education students *are* women – they make the following suggestions:

> To begin with, there are no entry qualifications, nor are there any final examinations. Many women's experience of education has left them without either formal qualifications or the confidence to seek out examinable courses elsewhere. Consequently the experience of many teachers is that many women come to adult education only too keenly aware of the deficits in their previous education.
>
> The classes are part-time and can be followed either during the day or in the evening, which fits in well with most women's domestic commitments or with work outside the home. Such courses do not require paid release from work or significant absence from home.
>
> Adult education is relatively cheap and since many women have very little income of their own to spend on themselves, this is an added attraction.
>
> Some childcare is offered through crèche facilities, so many younger women welcome the chance of being less housebound.
>
> Perhaps the most powerful reason why so many women are attracted to adult education is that it is not, by and large, a threat or a challenge, since it confirms and supports women's traditional roles. This confirmation ensures the consent of other members of the household who might resent a more challenging style of instruction.

The last reason given helps to foster the household arts: the married woman's night out is fully legitimized by her return home with a patchwork cushion or an iced cake. The wife who comes back with a new idea about the national economy has nothing to display but a shocking tendency to hold contradictory opinions and upset domestic calm.

In relation to these standard offerings, the report accuses the providers of ignoring the changes that have taken place in women's lives and aspirations and of still providing what was thought appropriate in 1931. It pinpoints the institutional reasons why change has reflected the *status quo*, rather than the developing needs of women, e.g.

> Of course, there have been changes and developments: the make-do-and-mend classes of the 40's are no longer so-named but successive reorganisations of adult education have led to the growth of depart-

ments of fashion and food studies augmented by the establishment of many new associate lectureships, following the Burnham agreement. So we continue to offer a substantial traditional programme largely because our staff is weighted in favour of that section of the curriculum. The new work with women in Fresh Start courses and self-defence, for example, does not fit neatly in the departmental structure and therefore tends to be regarded as peripheral to the current focus of the adult education programme. This situation continues because we are, at the moment, colluding with the notion that the majority of our students are or should be good wives and mothers, needing support in and confirmation of, those roles . . . We talk of responding to local need but we have to admit that our student population is but a fraction of the wider population. We have little idea about the missing women. We offer our prospectus to the women who come forward and they already have a good idea of what is on our timetable.

Where programmes have been built up round staff, existing and available, rather than from a new perspective of the changes taking place in society, they may remain static and role-bound. Nearly two-thirds of the women whose questionnaire replies are analyzed in our earlier chapters had experience of this range of adult education classes. From yoga to pottery, cookery to languages – they mentioned courses entered, worked on, left or completed – mostly lasting a year or part of a year. For a few only, this had meant concentration over a period of time on an art or craft that became the main focus of their energies. Some of these with the further investment of a higher education course following fresh start had achieved a professional status. But for most of the respondents the range of 'women's subjects' were taken because they were there – non-threatening outlets for the domestic woman. In so limiting their range of choice to what is expected of them or is convenient to provide, given the available staff, we are denying them the opportunities that, perhaps unconsciously, they are seeking to develop new growth and potential.

One questionnaire respondent had evidently made many efforts to find the direction she was looking for. Frustrated at school she left at 14 and worked for seven years, first in a sewing factory, then as a canteen assistant and later as a filing clerk. After a break of ten years at home bringing up two children, she returned to part-time work as a waitress. Adult education for her had meant cookery, cake-icing, confectionary, sewing and a try-out of pottery and art along with keep-fit and swimming. She did not have an easy time on the Fresh Horizons course feeling, as she said, 'out of my depth. I had stayed for too long at home rearing my family'. Yet, she wrote, 'I still want to continue my education. The course gave me an appetite for more.' Her final

summing-up to the question 'Are you aware of changes in yourself and your range of interests since taking the course?' was an emphatic 'Yes. No more cookery or sewing classes.'

None of this is to deny that a comprehensive approach is as important in adult as in any other stage of education. Self-chosen opportunities for physical education need to figure in adult programmes as much as they do, on a compulsory basis, in school timetables. Arts and crafts, inadequately represented in the earlier school-lives of many adults, are important avenues to aesthetic development. When some local education authorities slot such activities into 'Leisure' programmes, they not only expose them to the VAT inspector, but deny the very principle of comprehension which they claim as essential in the schools.

But there is the need for an academic challenge and for women's courses that face the need for counselling and intellectual discipline. It is a misuse of the limited resources of adult education if women, its main consumers, are not provided with full access to opportunities for development. There are not enough fresh-start initiatives through which women are encouraged to think for themselves, to read, write and study, so acquiring intellectual tools for still further development.

Women's studies and adult education

The voluntary bodies that are among the providers of adult education are precluded by the grant regulations under which they receive their measure of public subsidy from offering classes in practical and craft activities. But women still provide the majority of the students recruited by University Extra-mural Departments and the Workers' Educational Association as the main providers of grant-aided 'liberal', i.e. academic, adult education. Successive generations of feminists from John Stuart Mill onwards have challenged the man-made character of much that has been provided in the name of the 'humanities', finding it distorted by the monocular vision of those in command.

From the late 1960s, women academics, particularly in the USA, started to rethink the nature and content of their disciplines. The introduction of 'Women's studies' as a defined element in programmes of the WEA in Britain from the mid-1970s, proved to be the Association's fastest growing point.[2] Women researchers in universities and elsewhere were adding to the store of knowledge to be drawn on and providing a stimulus to consciousness-raising. Women's studies appear as an informing element in fresh-start courses but the extent to which they do so is very much in the hands of the tutors and groups of students themselves. Whether or not they are explicitly presented, the influence of feminist scholarship comes through, as indeed it should more and more, within the parent disciplines affected.

Adult education as liberation

From the experience of women's studies and what they imply, some feminists see as the sought-for outcome an adult education model for change. As expressed by Dale Spender they see adult education as a context where 'women can "liberate" themselves from male control, if they can assume the reins, decree that no one has greater authority on the grounds of height, weight, class, ethnicity or sex' and where they can 'generate and validate their own knowledge'. Adult education, she says, is 'one of the greatest potential sources . . . where women can come together and make their own knowledge, become their own teachers and generate their own version of reality'.[3]

For Jane Thompson 'the key issues for women in education are not about academic excellence or access to institutions but about securing our position in an educational system which takes our concerns, our questions, our needs and our strengths as women completely seriously and this means a very different kind of system'. Adult education is, therefore, to be a process through which women, against considerable odds, 'learn liberation'. In fact, the intentions of the Second Chance courses started by her in 1979, are not, as expressed, very different from those of earlier fresh-start courses established elsewhere. She speaks of prospective students being able 'to enjoy a book which would previously have seemed intimidating, . . . to complete a piece of writing . . . to discuss and debate issues . . . to work collectively on a project' and to get each woman 'to revalue her own ability and to contemplate doing more than she imagines herself capable of achieving'.[4]

This was to be through 'serious education' but the topics chosen were to provide a vehicle 'for examination of being female in our society'. Through an inter-disciplinary study of law, literature, sociology, politics and history from the point of view of women, 'we were' she says, 'clearly offering an initiation into feminism'. Admission to the course was by interview with positive discrimination in favour of working-class women and she excluded those who wanted to use a 'second chance' as a way of changing professions. She adds, however, 'This doesn't mean that some of our students are not interested in moving into some form of further or higher education or exerting the right to train for jobs usually considered masculine.' She sees this as a challenge to male monopoly and a way of increasing women's power in society.

There is, in fact, a certain ambivalence in the assumptions about what to do, given the facts of living in a male-dominated world – go in to change it or live outside it so as not to be false to feminist principles. Hence her question as to whether a Second Chance course in liberation is 'long enough for women to discover both an enthusiasm for learning and the courage and resolve to later withstand the strictures and values of the patriarchal practices of higher education'.

This is indeed the dilemma of all adult educators who are seeking to promote change, whether among trade unionists, the working class at large or women. To give students the means to achieve it, they have to

be equipped with the tools available through existing systems even while they protest against them. The experience of Jane Thompson gained from the women she taught seems to have influenced the outright radical, separatist approach to women's education, envisaged as the ideal way forward. She writes:

> For those who are separatists the solution is simple . . . but the solution of separation, both from men in general and from their educational system in particular, will only ever be acceptable to a minority of women . . . in the end most of us will need to confront patriarchal relationships with a view to altering them and liberating both men and women from their restrictions.

But doubts as to whether men will take part in changing a system that has served them so well lead her to advocate 'our own educational tradition alongside men's education . . . and to make strategic alliances where appropriate, with those groups, including men, who are concerned to challenge previous oppression'.

The responsibility of the NIACE

With the somewhat belated formation of a Women's Advisory Group in Adult Education, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education is challenged to promote equality between women and men working as professionals and, for the first time, amend its constitution so as to recognize the key importance of adult education for women's lives. It should state explicitly that it recognizes 'the value of developing initiatives in women's education and seek to support and encourage new ways of working in this area' as well as reviewing 'existing policies to see how far they reflect women's expressed needs and concerns and amending or developing them where necessary'.[5]

The group proposes that:

- since education is a most effective instrument for change in any society (by increasing opportunities and influencing attitudes);
- since the object of NIACE is the promotion of the study and the general advancement of adult continuing education;
- since women predominate in adult continuing education both as students and workers;
- since, as a national representative body with a wide membership and an extensive range of activities, it is well placed to influence other institutions;

NIACE has a responsibility both to promote a model of equality and to provide one in its own role of employer.

Further outlook – unsettled

What of the future? Old hands complain with justification that adult education, as they knew it, is disappearing fast. University extra-mural departments and the WEA find their base in liberal adult education chipped at by cuts in government grants and the local education authorities see their programmes of comprehensive educational provision for adults, never well funded, continually threatened. Under a variety of labels and acronyms the government, largely through the MSC, is altering the programmes and outlook that in the 1960s and early 1970s provided a philosophy of adult education based on a belief in individual self-development and social responsibility. Money is tied to specific vocational or remedial purposes for limited periods that must always be justified as having a training context.

Even training itself, designed to provide a reserve of competence, has been reduced as 'training for stock'[6] and no longer seems to be thought a worthwhile investment. Nor is this surprising: the very term 'training for stock' is reminiscent of 'hands' working for Victorian mill-owners. Training in any real sense cannot take place without a genuine educational base; even the MSC recognizes this, at least in theory, when it records in its 1983 discussion paper[7] that: 'A strategy worthy of the name must aim to make the best use of the training and associated education system in the medium term. It must start with the education and individual needs to equip him to deal with and benefit from continuing training requirements.' And again:

> Often what helps economic recovery will also help individuals without a job but the converse is not always so clear. We must therefore ensure that within the overall framework for the longer term, the education and training systems can respond to the needs and aspirations of the individuals who comprise the nation's workforce. An economic emphasis in a training strategy should exploit, rather than ignore their right to personal development throughout working life and can only succeed if the proper foundations for such development and for ensuring equality of opportunity are laid at an early stage.

Consciously or unconsciously the discussion paper denied by implication that it included 'equality of opportunity' for women. The document's pictorial cover showed a dozen assorted men but no women, busy at the machines and work-stations of their recently-won skills.

There was a heavy response to the paper and in the same year the MSC issued its proposals for action.[8] Two of the main themes in the responses were that 'training and education must equip individuals with the general competencies and capacity for personal development that

will allow them to cope with change' and that the unemployed need not only direct training but also 'less vocationally specific provision which will stop them becoming unemployable and will further their personal development'. Placing this responsibility on the education service allowed for the funding of various schemes administered by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and, as these develop momentum, a considerable need for an integrated approach to developing learning skills and experience could produce some interesting 'fresh start' clones.

As for women, they cannot be excluded but how can they be positively encouraged? They have one mention only in the *Proposals for Action*, grouped once again with 'ethnic minorities and disabled people with some disadvantage in the labour market'.

The Women's National Commission, in its submission to the End of the Decade conference 1985,[9] took up some of these points. It spelt out the educational needs of women in relation to their special disadvantages through early sex-stereotyping in school and entry to work and the career break during their years of intense family care. It continued:

> The creation of unemployment as a part of the strategy for the nation's economic reorganisation has caused new disadvantages for women.
> - it helps the government if women conveniently disappear into the woodwork, are not seen as available for work and can be discouraged from thinking of themselves as part of the workforce.
> - yet, because they form a large part of the service sector where expansion is encouraged (outside the public services), there continues to be a demand for their labour.

The government's proposals for adult training virtually exclude women, especially women returners to the workforce. The amount of £250 million a year to be allocated to adult training is to be 'industry focused' administered by employers for 'job-related training' through which the skills of employees would be 'upgraded in key areas' and skill training applied to unemployed people in relation to local employment needs. This need not exclude women but how much likelihood is there of employers, with their known training record, seeing this as an opportunity to develop the skills of women, unless prompted by the MSC?

As it happens, much of the reported growth of employment that has taken place during the decade, has been in low-waged part-time service jobs mainly recruiting women and for which training, if any, is minimal. In its evidence the Women's National Commission also recommended development in the adult education field as the best means by which women's education and employment potential might be improved. In

so far as the fresh-start concept has a concern for possible vocational outlets as well as meeting personal development needs, it is a concern firmly rooted in the tradition of individual and social development, implied in the term 'liberal adult education'. When the centrality of work as a dominant factor in adult life is increasingly in question, education and training conceived only in relation to it cannot be an adequate offering either to women or to men.

Women, indeed, have much to bring to a world in which production patterns are changing. Their way of life and work has made them adaptable, despite the under-use of their capacities outside the home, while men have been over-specialized and their capacities over-stressed. Nor, as a national community, are we alone in facing these problems. The situation of modern societies in the West was admirably summarized by Professor Torsten Husen of the Institute of International Education in the University of Stockholm, in an address to a European Bureau of Adult Education seminar in Sweden in September 1984:

> When working time is diminishing and the kind of work many are engaged in becomes increasingly specialised then life as a family member, as a citizen participating in the general culture, gains in importance. In an increasingly specialised and fragmented society it becomes increasingly difficult to gain the necessary overview and to find the bearings necessary for the orientation that behoves a participating citizen. Let me just hint at what I mean. In order to be a responsible and participating citizen in the social and political life, a person needs to have the *overview*, at least a rudimentary capacity to 'put it all together' in order not to be in the hands of shortsighted specialists in all those fields which have bearings on political and social issues. The debate on nuclear energy would suffice as an illustration of what I have in mind. I think it is time to revive the classical adult education which adhered to the ideal of humanistic education with the goal of promoting humaneness.[10]

Humaneness without competence may not suffice to cure all our ills: it is very sure that competence without humaneness will not. The case rests.

Appendix 1 - Statistical summary

The personal information recorded in this book, comes from a total of 325 women and 68 men who were students in the courses at the City Lit, London and the Richmond (Surrey) Adult and Community College between 1976 and 1983, from a small group of 37 women and 4 men who attended courses at the Swarthmore Educational Centre, Leeds, over a similar period, and from 19 women who took part in SCOPE courses organized by the YWCA in East Anglia.

Table A1 breaks down the numbers attending at the two main centres as between different times of meeting and compares them with the numbers of people approached, these being virtually the total enrolments for the period.

Non-respondents

In going back over a period of seven to eight years, loss of contact with considerable numbers is inevitable. It can safely be assumed that many more than the 20% of questionnaires returned 'Gone away' failed to reach the intended recipients. The proportion of 'Gone aways' rose to one-third for the London full-time and evening courses over the whole period, with higher figures for the first part of the period and lower ones for the second, as is shown in Table A2. This is unsurprising when the personal particulars of the students as to age, marital and occupational status are considered. For this information and for some particulars of post-course intentions we are not wholly dependent on the completed questionnaires. Sufficient detail exists from enrolment particulars and from monitoring of progress to enable some comparisons to be made between respondents and non-respondents. Tables A3 and A4 give comparative figures for women students attending the different

Table A1 *The numbers of questionnaires distributed and the numbers returned 'Gone away', assumed received and returned completed*

Courses and students by sex	QUESTIONNAIRES sent 1	gone away 2	assumed received 3	completed 4	4% x 1 5	4% x 3 6
LONDON						
Full-time						
Women	68	28	40	38	56%	95%
Men	68	19	49	24	35%	50%
Part-time day						
Women	205	29	176	94	45%	54%
Men	25	2	23	9	36%	39%
Evening						
Women	100	35	65	39	39%	60%
Men	47	9	38	24	51%	63%
TOTALS						
Women	373	92	281	171	46%	61%
Men	140	30	110	57	46%	52%
RICHMOND						
Part-time day						
Women	218	20	198	137	63%	69%
Men	12	5	7	3	x	x
Saturday						
Women	37	8	29	17	46%	59%
Men	12	2	10	8	x	x
TOTALS						
Women	255	28	227	154	60%	68%
Men	24	7	17	11	46%	65%

Table A2 *Questionnaires distributed, returned 'Gone away' and completed for four years 1976–7 to 1979–80 and three years 1980–1 to 1982–3*

Areas and periods	QUESTIONNAIRES sent 1	gone away 2	assumed received 3	completed 4	4% x 1 5	4% x 3 6
LONDON						
1976–79	283	88(31%)	195	98	35%	50%
1980–82	230	34(15%)	196	130	56%	66%
RICHMOND						
1976–79	133	25(17%)	108	69	52%	63%
1980–82	146	12(8%)	134	96	66%	72%
TOTALS						
1976–79	416	113(27%)	303	167	41%	55%
1980–82	376	46(12%)	330	226	60%	68%
ALL YEARS	792	159(20%)	633	393	49%	62%

Table A3 *London – women students: comparison of some personal characteristics between questionnaire respondents and non-respondents*

Characteristics	Full-time		Part-time day		Evening	
	Resp.	Non-R	Resp.	Non-R	Resp.	Non-R
N =	38	32	94	109	39	63
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Civil state						
Single	37	65	5	38	51	70
Married/ partnered	40	13	62	41	28	16
Widowed	5	9	4	5	3	1
Divorced/ separated	18	13	29	16	15	13
Age groups						
24 and under	8	9	2	11	13	5
25 – 29	39	44	9	22	23	40
30 – 39	39	44	47	39	33	38
40 – 49	3	3	36	18	23	13
50 and over	11	-	5	10	5	4
School-leaving ages						
15 and under	37	47	32	34	44	22
16	39	25	23	36	31	33
17	21	22	19	18	3	19
18 and over	3	6	26	12	22	26
Socio-occupational groups						
Professional	-	-	2	-	3	-
Intermediate	13	13	27	16	15	11
Skilled non-manual	68	69	57	65	79	75
Skilled manual	8	9	4	4	-	5
Partly and unskilled	11	6	8	2	3	3
Not known	-	3	2	13	-	6
Later study intentions						
Degree level	76	81	60	57	62	43
Other	24	6	27	25	23	22
None/not known	-	13	13	18	15	35

London courses and the Richmond part-time day course – the numbers of men scarcely justify a similar exercise.

The women non-respondents tend to be younger and more of them

Table A4 *Richmond – women students attending part-time day courses: comparison of some personal characteristics between questionnaire respondents and non-respondents*

Characters	Respondents	Non-Respondents
N =	137	82
	%	%
Civil state		
Single	4	12
Married/partnered	76	73
Widowed	2	1
Divorced/separated	18	14
Age-groups		
24 and under	1	5
25 - 29	9	12
30 - 39	47	62
40 - 49	31	17
50 and over	11	4
School-leaving ages		
15 and under	26	19
16	26	44
17	21	8
18 and over	27	29
Socio-economic groups		
Professional	-	4
Intermediate	30	16
Skilled non-manual	60	69
Skilled manual	4	2
Partly and unskilled	-	5
Not known	6	4

N.B. Information about non-respondents' intentions after the Fresh Start course is insufficient to provide a useful comparison.

single and probably, as a consequence, less stable residentially. There is little else to suggest major differences and it seems not unreasonable to

accept information from those who completed questionnaires as expressing the views, feelings and intentions of a wider constituency.

Respondents

Tables A5 and A6 summarize numerically and proportionately by percentages the questionnaire responses from women and men attending three types of courses – full-time, part-time day and evening – at the City Lit and the part-time mid-week and Saturday courses at Richmond. The numbers of women are large enough to reveal distinctions between different groups of participants, i.e. as between those attending in the day-time or the evening and as between those attending courses in central London and those making use of an adult college in an outer suburb. The implications of the figures in these tables are explored in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Other environments

Particulars are available for comparison from a small group of women attending fresh-start courses in a very different out-of-London environment, i.e. the Swarthmore Educational Centre, Leeds. Table A7 sets some of the characteristics of these respondents against those of women also attending part-time day classes in London and Richmond. Although the numbers are small, it is apparent that the Swarthmore women have lower educational backgrounds, probably associated in part with higher average ages: proportionately more of them have done manual work and have manual-working husbands. A very much smaller proportion envisage committing themselves to formal higher education. That these courses have continued and grown since their inception in 1975, is useful evidence for the validity of the fresh-start approach in widely different circumstances.

The same may be said of the YWCA 'SCOPE' (Second Chance Opportunities and Education for Women) courses. The number of respondents to questionnaires is too small to justify detailed analysis and percentaging but in general terms it can be said that they represent a body of women with higher educational and socio-economic backgrounds, who are none the less conscious of educational and occupational disadvantages in relation to their capacities and potentialities and welcome opportunities to relieve them in some degree.

Table A5 *FS/FH – women students returning questionnaires – summary of total responses all years*

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Rich. Day	Rich. Sat.	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Lond. Day %	Rich. Day %	Rich. Sat. %	Totals %
1.1	*School attended*													
	sec /mod/all age	1	16	11	20	28	3	78	42	28	21	20	18	24
	tech/central	2	–	1	8	9	–	18	–	3	9	7	–	6
	grammar	3	6	11	32	46	11	106	16	28	34	33	64	32
	comprehensive	4	8	6	5	5	2	26	21	15	5	4	12	8
	other	5	–	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	1
	private day	6	6	6	11	22	1	46	16	15	12	16	6	14
	private boarding	7	2	3	16	25	–	46	5	8	17	18	–	14
	N.A.		–	1	2	–	–	3	–	3	2	–	–	1
			38	39	94	127	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
1.2	*Age completing*													
	15 & –	9	14	17	30	36	2	99	37	44	32	26	12	30
	16	10	15	12	22	35	9	93	39	31	23	26	53	29
	17	11	8	1	18	29	3	59	21	3	19	21	18	18
	18–19	12	1	8	18	26	3	56	3	20	19	19	17	17
	20 & +	13	–	1	6	11	–	18	–	2	7	8	–	6
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
1.3	*Early education affected*	14	32	29	62	63	9	195	84	74	66	46	53	60

Table A5 (continued)

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Rich. Day	Rich. Sat.	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Lond. Day %	Rich. Day %	Rich. Sat. %	Totals %
1.4	*School exams*													
	CSE/RSA	15/18	5	4	5	6	2	22	13	12	5	5	12	7
	'O' level	16	18	15	36	73	10	152	47	44	38	53	59	47
	'A' level	17	–	5	20	22	2	49	–	12	21	16	12	15
	Nil		15	15	33	36	3	102	39	32	35	26	17	31
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
1.5	*Post-school courses*													
	F.T. cert	19	11	13	47	71	6	148	29	33	50	52	35	45
	P.T. cert only	20	10	12	12	34	5	73	26	31	14	25	29	23
	non-cert	21	25	24	59	88	11	207	66	61	63	64	64	64
	cert and non-cert		12	12	35	70	5	134	32	31	37	52	29	41
	non-cert only		13	12	24	18	6	73	34	31	23	13	35	22
	nil		4	2	11	14	–	31	10	5	13	10	–	10
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
1.7	*Employment experience*													
	full-time	22	38	39	81	119	16	293	100	100	86	80	94	90
	part-time only	23	–	–	9	11	1	21	–	–	10	8	6	6
	professional	24	–	1	2	–	–	3	–	–	2	–	–	1
	intermediate	25	5	6	25	42	5	83	13	15	27	30	29	26
	skilled non-manual	26	26	31	54	82	12	205	68	79	57	60	71	63
	skilled manual	27	3	–	4	5	–	12	8	–	4	4	–	4
	partly/unskilled	28/9	4	1	7	–	–	12	11	3	8	–	–	4
	nil		–	–	4	7	–	11	–	–	2	6	–	2
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100

1.8	*Work training*												
	at work only	31	5	5	24	36	6	76	13	13	26	28	35	23
	day release	32	4	4	3	9	–	20	11	10	3	6	–	6
	both		2	2	–	6	1	11	5	5	–	4	6	3
	nil		27	28	67	86	10	218	71	72	71	62	59	68
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
2.1	*Household*													
	any – 5	33	7	2	11	32	3	55	18	5	12	23	18	17
	any 5 – 18	34	7	7	55	83	7	159	18	18	59	61	41	49
	single parent	35	7	4	24	27	3	65	18	10	26	20	18	20
2.2	*Life changes*													
	before course	36	18	17	47	64	9	155	47	44	50	47	53	48
	during course	37	10	9	13	26	5	63	26	23	14	19	29	20
2.3	*Relations affected*													
	with home/family	38	24	11	58	65	7	165	63	26	61	47	41	51
	with work assocs.	39	4	12	9	10	4	39	11	28	10	7	24	12
	with social contacts	40	22	21	5	68	9	173	58	54	56	50	53	53
	nil		10	14	23	52	6	105	26	36	24	38	35	32
2.4	*Adjustments*													
	job	41	20	10	27	21	1	79	53	26	29	15	6	24
	house	42	13	9	42	36	4	105	34	23	45	26	24	32
	family	43	10	12	35	44	5	106	26	31	37	31	29	32
	social	44	10	11	21	10	6	58	26	28	22	7	35	18
	nil		6	15	27	64	6	118	16	38	29	47	35	36
2.5	*Principal motives*													
	work/F.E.	45	22	22	51	66	5	166	58	56	54	48	29	51
	personal/social	46	16	17	43	71	12	159	42	44	46	52	71	49
2.6	changed (45)	47	8	9	15	32	1	65	21	23	16	23	6	20
	changed (46)	47	14	12	30	32	7	95	37	31	32	23	41	29
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table A5 (continued)

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Rich. Day	Rich. Sat.	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Lond. Day %	Rich. Day %	Rich. Sat. %	Totals %
3.1	*Education/training after*													
	full-time	48	31	16	56	38	5	146	82	41	59	28	29	45
	degree	50	29	16	53	27	4	129	76	41	56	20	24	40
	other		2	–	3	11	1	17	5	–	3	8	5	5
	part-time	49	7	18	28	68	7	128	18	46	30	47	41	38
	degree	50	–	7	13	18	–	38	–	18	14	12	–	11
	other		7	11	15	50	7	90	18	28	16	35	41	27
	nil		–	5	10	31	5	51	–	13	11	25	30	18
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
3.2	*Prevented from*													
	taking 3.1	51	6	10	23	43	9	91	16	26	24	31	53	28
	completing 3.1	52	3	6	15	8	2	34	8	15	16	6	12	10
4.1	*Domestic responsibilities*													
	having	53	19	12	78	121	10	240	50	31	83	88	41	73
4.2	*Emp beginning FS*													
	self-employed	54	1	2	1	3	–	7	2	5	1	2	–	2
	working F.T.	55	16	25	5	8	9	63	42	65	5	6	53	20
	working P.T.	56	9	4	31	32	4	80	24	10	33	23	24	25
	not working		12	8	57	94	4	175	32	20	61	69	23	53
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100

4.3 *Work during course*													
continuing work	57	3	31	26	30	11	101	8	79	28	22	65	31
changed work	58	1	3	2	5	–	11	3	8	2	4	–	3
gave up work	59	24	1	9	7	2	43	63	3	10	5	12	13
started work	60	–	1	2	6	1	10	–	3	2	4	6	3
4.5 *Work after FS/FH*													
full-time	62	8	12	12	9	1	42	21	31	13	7	6	13
part-time	63	11	7	23	31	4	76	29	18	24	23	24	23
4.6 *Post-course work*													
related to FS/FH	64	3	3	4	9	1	20	8	8	4	7	6	6
related to later E/T	65	4	4	14	17	–	39	11	10	15	13	–	12
4.7 *Voluntary work*													
before	66	5	6	10	14	3	38	13	15	11	10	18	12
before and after	66/8	–	–	4	4	–	8	–	–	4	3	–	2
before and during	66/7	1	–	3	6	–	10	3	–	3	4	–	3
before during and after	66/7/8	1	1	13	21	2	38	3	3	14	15	12	12
during	67	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	–
during and after	67/8	–	–	3	4	–	7	–	–	3	–	–	2
after only	68	4	4	11	13	1	33	10	10	12	11	6	10
nil		27	28	49	75	11	190	71	72	52	57	64	59
		38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
5.1 *Counselling*													
unnecessary/unimpt	69	–	2	5	22	–	29	–	5	5	16	6	9
useful	70	9	8	20	60	6	103	24	20	21	44	35	32
very helpful	71	27	26	65	49	9	176	71	67	69	36	53	54
N.A.		2	3	4	6	2	17	5	8	4	4	6	5
		38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table A5 (continued)

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Rich. Day	Rich. Sat.	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Lond. Day %	Rich. Day %	Rich. Sat. %	Totals %
5.2	*Anything to add*	72	26	30	66	76	11	199	68	51	70	55	65	61
5.3	*Other changes*	73	27	27	69	82	11	216	71	69	73	60	65	67
	Enrolment ages													
	24 & -	74	3	5	2	1	1	12	8	13	2	1	6	4
	25 - 29	75	15	9	9	13	4	50	39	23	10	9	24	15
	30 - 39	76	15	13	44	64	8	144	39	33	47	47	46	44
	40 - 49	77	1	9	34	43	3	90	3	23	36	31	18	28
	50 - 59	78	4	2	5	12	1	24	11	5	5	9	6	7
	60 & +	79	-	1	-	2	-	3	-	3	-	2	-	1
	N.A.		-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	1
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Civil state													
	single	80	14	20	5	6	3	48	37	51	5	4	18	15
	married/partnered	81	15	11	58	103	9	196	40	28	62	76	53	60
	widowed	82	2	1	4	3	-	10	5	3	4	2	-	3
	sep/divorced	83	7	6	27	25	5	70	18	15	29	18	29	21
	N.A.		-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	1
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Spouse status													
	professional	84	-	3	21	41	2	67	-	8	22	29	12	20
	intermediate	85	10	6	31	50	3	100	26	15	33	37	18	31
	skilled non-manual	86	-	2	1	1	2	6	-	6	1	1	12	2
	skilled manual	87	2	1	4	6	2	15	5	2	4	4	12	5
	partly & unskilled	88/9	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-
	N.A.		25	27	37	39	8	136	66	69	40	29	46	42
			38	39	94	137	17	325	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table A6 *FS/FH – men students returning questionnaires – summary of total responses all years*

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Richmd. Mid/Sat.	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Totals %
1.1	*School attended*									
	sec. mod/all age	1	8	14	2	5	29	33	58	46
	tech/central	2	1	1	–	1	3	4	4	5
	grammar	3	4	4	–	–	8	17	16	11
	comprehensive	4	8	2	1	2	13	33	8	17
	other	5	1	1	–	–	2	4	4	2
	private day	6	–	1	3	2	6	–	5	8
	private boarding	7	2	1	3	1	7	8	5	11
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
1.2	*Age completing*									
	15 & –	9	14	7	2	3	26	58	29	41
	16	10	8	7	3	2	20	33	29	29
	17	11	–	4	–	4	8	–	17	11
	18–19	12	2	5	3	1	11	9	21	14
	20 & +	13	–	1	1	1	3	–	4	4
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
1.3	*Early education affected*	14	18	15	5	9	47	75	63	63

Table A6 (continued)

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Richmd. Mid/Sat.	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Totals %
1.4	*School exams*									
	CSE/RSA	15/18	5	8	2	3	18	21	33	27
	'O' level	16	6	11	3	3	23	25	46	32
	'A' level	17	2	–	1	2	5	8	–	8
	Nil		11	5	3	3	22	46	21	33
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
1.5	*Post-school courses*									
	F.T. cert	19	4	7	3	3	17	16	25	25
	P.T. cert only	20	7	9	–	2	18	29	36	29
	Non-cert	21	12	11	4	6	33	50	46	46
	Cert and non-cert		4	6	2	2	14	17	25	19
	Non-cert only		7	3	3	4	17	29	13	27
	Nil		4	4	2	2	12	11	16	19
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
1.7	*Employment experience*									
	full-time	22	23	23	9	10	65	96	96	97
	part-time only	23	1	–	–	–	1	4	–	2

professional	**24**	1	1	–	1	3	4	5	5
intermediate	25	5	6	4	1	16	21	29	22
skilled non-manual	26	5	6	3	8	22	21	25	33
skilled manual	27	4	6	–	–	10	17	25	14
partly/unskilled	28/29	9	4	2	–	15	37	16	24
nil		–	1	–	1	2	–	4	2
		24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
1.8 *Work training*									
at work only	31	6	7	2	5	20	25	29	30
day release only	32	3	2	–	–	5	13	8	8
both		2	1	2	–	5	8	4	6
nil		13	14	5	6	38	54	59	56
		24	24	9	11	6	100	100	100
2.1 *Household*									
any – 5	33	2	2	–	1	5	8	8	5
any 5 – 18	34	3	3	1	2	9	13	13	14
2.2 *Life changes*									
before course	36	8	7	5	5	25	38	29	37
during course	37	8	4	6	2	20	33	16	29
2.3 *Relations affected*									
with home/family	38	10	6	1	2	19	42	25	29
with work associates	39	5	7	2	4	18	21	29	27
with social contacts	40	14	10	2	4	30	58	42	44
nil		6	11	7	4	28	25	46	46

Table A6 (continued)

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Richmd. Mid/Sat	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Totals %
2.4	*Adjustments*									
	job	41	12	7	2	4	25	50	29	46
	house	42	3	–	2	–	5	13	–	22
	family	43	4	4	1	2	11	16	16	14
	social	44	4	7	1	2	14	16	29	13
	nil		9	11	4	5	29	38	46	44
2.5	*Principal motives*									
	work/F.E.	45	12	13	7	5	37	54	54	54
	personal/social	46	11	10	2	6	29	46	42	44
2.6	changed (45)	47	2	3	1	1	7	9	13	10
	changed (46)	47	6	2	–	2	10	25	8	14
	N.A.		1	1	–	–	2	4	4	2
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
			Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Richmd. Mid/Sat	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Totals %
3.1	*Education/training after*									
	full-time	48	21	11	6	3	41	88	46	59
	degree	50	21	11	5	3	40	88	46	57
	other	49	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	2

	part-time	49	2	5	–	4	11	8	25	17
	degree	50	–	1	–	2	3	–	4	5
	other		2	4	–	2	8	8	16	12
	nil		1	8	3	4	16	4	33	24
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
3.2	*Prevented from*									
	taking 3.1	51	1	6	2	1	10	4	25	14
	completing 3.1	52	2	2	1	1	6	8	8	10
4.1	*Domestic responsibilities*									
	having	53	5	–	2	1	8	21	–	11
4.2	*EMP beginning FS*									
	self employed	54	4	6	–	–	10	16	25	14
	working F.T.	55	11	16	2	7	36	42	67	52
	working P.T.	56	1	–	1	–	2	4	–	4
	not working		8	2	6	4	20	33	8	30
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
4.3	*Work during course*									
	continuing work	57	2	21	2	6	31	8	88	46
	changed work	58	2	–	–	–	2	8	–	3
	gave up work	59	12	2	–	1	15	50	8	21
	started work	60	–	1	1	–	2	–	4	3

Table A6 (continued)

Q	Particulars	C	Lond. F.T.	Lond. Evng.	Lond. Day	Richmd. Mid/Sat	Totals	Lond. F.T. %	Lond. Evng. %	Totals %
4.5	*Work after FS/FH*									
	full-time	62	7	1	–	–	8	29	4	11
	part-time	63	8	3	–	1	12	33	13	17
4.6	*Post course work*									
	related to FS/FH	64	1	1	–	–	2	4	4	2
	related to later E/T	65	1	3	–	–	4	4	13	3
4.7	*Voluntary work*									
	before	66	2	–	–	1	3	8	–	5
	before and after	66/8	1	–	–	–	1	4	–	1
	before and during	66/7	1	–	–	–	1	4	–	2
	before during & after	66/7/8	2	2	1	–	5	8	8	8
	during	67	–	–	1	1	2	–	–	2
	after only	68	2	4	1	2	9	8	17	14
	nil		16	18	6	7	47	63	75	68
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100

5.1	*Counselling*								
	unnecessary/unimpt	69	–	1	4	2	7	–	4	11
	useful	70	5	9	4	2	20	21	38	30
	very helpful	71	18	13	1	5	37	75	54	56
	N.A.		1	1	–	2	4	4	4	3
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
5.2	*Anything to add*	72	16	11	5	3	35	67	46	54
5.3	*Other changes*	73	17	11	2	5	35	71	46	54
	Enrolment ages									
	24 & –	74	3	2	1	1	7	13	8	11
	25 – 29	75	5	4	3	3	15	21	16	22
	30 – 39	76	14	11	1	4	30	58	46	44
	40 – 49	77	2	5	3	1	11	8	21	16
	50 – 59	78	–	2	–	–	2	–	8	2
	60 & +	79	–	–	–	2	2	–	–	3
	N.A.		–	–	1	–	1	–	–	2
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100
	Civil state									
	single	80	15	15	6	2	38	63	63	56
	married/partnered	81	7	6	3	7	23	29	25	33
	sep/divorced	83	2	3	–	2	7	8	12	11
			24	24	9	11	68	100	100	100

Table A7 *Comparison of some personal characteristics of women attending part-time day classes at centres in London, Richmond and Leeds*

Characteristics	City Lit London		A & C College Richmond		Swarthmore Leeds	
N =	94		137		37	
	%		%		%	
Ages						
29 and under	12		10		8	
30–39	47		47		46	
40–49	31		31		14	
50 and over	5		11		24	
Household						
Any under 5	12		23		27	
Any 5–18	59		61		43	
Single parent	26		20		8	
Schooling						
Sec.mod/all age	30		27		51	
Grammar/comprehensive	39		39		43	
Private day	12		16		6	
Private boarding	17		18		–	
Not known	2		–		–	
School-leaving ages						
15 or under	32		26		49	
16	23		26		32	
17 and over	45		48		19	
School examinations						
CSE/RSA etc.	5		5		11	
GCE 'O' levels	38		53		38	
GCE 'A' levels	21		16		5	
Nil	36		26		46	
S.E.G. self and spouse	self	spouse	self	spouse	self	spouse
Prof. intermediate	29	91	30	93	21	75
skilled non-manual	57	2	60	1	49	4
skilled manual	4	7	4	6	11	21
partly & unskilled manual	8	–	–	–	5	–

Appendix 2 - Notes and references

Introduction

1 Enid and Edward Hutchinson, *Learning Later – Fresh Horizons in English adult education*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978.

2 Susan Lucas and Peter Ward, *A Survey of 'Access' Courses in England*, University of Lancaster, School of Education, 1985.

PART 1 – THE FRESH START EXPERIENCE

Chapter 1 Why women – and what about men?

1 Macoby and Jacklin, *Psychology of Sex Differences*, Stanford University Press, 2 vols., 1978.

2 Charlotte Bronte, *Shirley*.

3 'I was the one who insisted that children wouldn't grow up right unless they had their mother all the time . . . I took the plunge into family life earlier, more deeply and with my eyes completely closed than anyone else. This was 1967, 1968 and 1969 – the years before the women's movement', Ann Oakley, *Taking it Like a Woman*, Flamingo, 1984, p. 70. (The author does not relate her experience to the changed partnering ratio that was impelling a generation of young women into marriage – also, very much, with 'closed eyes'.)

4 Jean Martin and Ceridwen Roberts, *Women and Employment – a lifetime perspective*, HMSO, London, 1984, p. 12.

5 Eileen M. Byrne, *Women and Education*, Tavistock Women's Studies, London, 1978, p. 159.

6 Martin and Roberts, p. 20.
7 'The needs for training to help groups such as women, ethnic minorities and disabled people with some disadvantage in the labour market would continue to receive special attention', Manpower Services Commission, *Adult Training Strategy: proposals for action*, 1983, paragraph 22.
8 Jan Pahl, 'Who benefits from child benefit?', *New Society*, vol. 72, no. 1, 25 April 1985, p. 165.
9 'Women in Higher Education', Staff Development Unit, London University, Institute of Education, *Women and the Open University*, 1973, quoted by Byrne, p. 209.
10 Anne Hartree and Maggie Marum, *Valuing your Experience – a tutor's handbook*, Hillcroft College/MSC, Crown, 1985.
11 Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *General Household Survey*, 1982, p. 131.
12 A. H. Charnley, V. K. McGivney, D. J. Sims, *Education for the Adult Unemployed*, NIACE, 1985.

Chapter 2 Courses and students – London and Richmond

1 Enid and Edward Hutchinson, *Learning Later – Fresh Horizons in English adult education*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978.
2 Eileen M. Byrne, *Women and Education*, Tavistock Women's Studies, London, 1978, p. 159.
3 Jean Martin and Ceridwen Roberts, *Women and Employment – a lifetime perspective*, HMSO, London, 1984, p. 12.
4 A. Hunt, *A Survey of Women's Employment*, HMSO, London, 1968.
5 Sheila M. Stoney and Margaret I. Reid, *Further Opportunities in Focus – a study of bridging courses for women*, Further Education Unit and National Foundation for Educational Research, Department of Education and Science, London, 1980.
6 Martin and Roberts, p. 175.
7 'Nothing has prepared young wives for the relentless boredom of scrubbing floors and ironing sheets': Hannah Gavron, *The Captive Wife*, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1966, p. 132. (The average ages of her two samples were 25 and 27.)

Chapter 4 Moving on

1 Sheila M. Stoney and Margaret I. Reid, *Balancing the Equation – a study of women and science and technology within further education*, National Foundation for Educational Research, commissioned by the Further Education Unit, London, 1981; Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education, *Basic Science*

Education for Adults, 1981; Jan Harding, *Switched-off: the science education of girls*, Schools Council Programme 3, Longmans, Harlow, 1983.

PART 2 – OTHER INITIATIVES

Chapter 5 'Return to study' and 'Return to work'

1 Enid Hutchinson, 'Return to study courses', *Adult Education*, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 98–103.
2 Jonathan F. Brown. 'What shall we do with New Opportunities courses?', *Adult Education*, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 42-4.
3 Sheila M. Stoney and Margaret I. Reid, *Further Opportunities in Focus – a study of bridging courses for women*, Further Education Unit and National Foundation for Educational Research, Department of Education and Science, London, 1980.
4 Ruth Michaels and Katherine Booth, *New Opportunities for Women*, Hatfield Polytechnic, 1979.
5 YWCA, *SCOPE – Second-Chance Opportunities and Education for Women*, YWCA, London and Southern England Regional Office, London, 1974.
6 Further Education Unit, *Changing the Focus – women and further education*, Department of Education and Science, London, 1985, p. 9.
7 Enid Hutchinson, 'Early return of the late developers', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 19 December 1980.
8 Valerie Wilson, 'Wider opportunities for women', *Adult Education*, vol. 57, pp. 310-14, 1985.

Chapter 6 Open learning – Open College

1 H. A. Jones and K. E. Williams, *Adult Students and Higher Education*, Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education, Paper No. 3, 1979.
2 K. A. Percy and Susan Lucas (ed.), *The Open College and Alternatives*, Lancaster Series in Adult Education, no. 2, University of Lancaster, 1980.
3 Susan Lucas, 'Analysis of Characteristics of Open College Students', in letter to Derek Crosland, Tutor-co-ordinator, February 1985.
4 Percy and Lucas, op. cit.
5 Keith Percy, John Powell and Christine Flude, *Students in the Open College of the North-West – a follow-up study*, Combe Lodge Report, vol. 16, no. 14, Further Education Staff College, Combe Lodge, Bristol, 1983.

6 *Seminar on Open College Federations*, 7 June 1983, organized by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.
7 Susan Lucas, op. cit.
8 Roger Jinkinson, in *Seminar on Open College Federations.*
9 *Towards a Strategy for the Development of Open Learning Arrangements in ILEA*, report of a Conference, May 1984, paragraph 1.3.
10 Ibid, paragraph 3.1
11 Enid Hutchinson, 'What's on in South London: a report' *LACE Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1984.

Chapter 7 Accent on Access

1 Experience in South Africa, where black official community workers may be seen by black protesters as 'collaborators' with the white ruling classes, could invite doubts about this policy.
2 Universities Central Council for Admissions (UCCA), *Statistics*, 1980–1, 1981–2.
3 P. K. C. Millins, *Access Studies to Higher Education*, Roehampton Institute Centre for Access Studies to Higher Education, 1984.
4 Susan Lucas and Peter Ward, *A Survey of Access Courses in England*, University of Lancaster, School of Education, 1985.
5 Andrew Pates and Martin Good, *Second Chances*, National Extension College, Cambridge, 1985.

Chapter 8 'Higher' and 'further'

1 *Adult Training Strategy – proposals for action*, MSC, London, 1983.
2 Mary Burrow, 'Wider opportunities for women and work', *Adult Education*, vol. 58, no. 2, 1985, p. 158.
3 *Adult Training Strategy*.
4 Robert Moore and Peter Whybrow, *Women in the North Sea Oil Industry*, EOC, 1984, chapter 3, 'Geologists'.
5 Personal communication to Professor Brian Groombridge, Director of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, from the University Entry Requirements Officer, June 1985 (a warning against using out-of-date prospectuses).
6 Norman Evans, Policy Studies Institute, *Access to Higher Education: non-standard entry to CNAA first degrees and Dip.HE courses*, CNAA Development Services, Publication 6, 1984.
7 Lindop Report, *Academic Validation in Public Sector Higher Education*, HMSO, Cmd. 9501, London, 1985.
8 Norman Evans, op. cit.

9 H. A. Jones and K. E. Williams, *Adult Students and Higher Education*, Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE), 1979, p. 55.
10 Malcolm Tight, *Part-time Degree-level Study in the United Kingdom*, ACACE, 1982.
11 Department of Education and Science, *Future Demand for Higher Education in Great Britain*, Report on Education no. 99, April 1983.
12 Department of Education and Science, *Demand for Higher Education in Great Britain, 1984–2,000*, Report on Education, no. 100, July 1984.
13 Susan Lucas and Peter Ward, 'Mature students at Lancaster University', *Adult Education*, vol. 58, pp. 151-7.
14 Jean Martin and Ceridwen Roberts, *Women and Employment – a lifetime perspective*, Department of Employment and OPCS, HMSO, London, 1984, p. 11.
15 Sheila M. Stoney and Margaret I. Reid, *Further Opportunities in Focus – a study of bridging courses for women*, Further Education Unit and National Foundation for Educational Research, Department of Education and Science, London, 1980, p. 14.
16 Ibid, p. 51.
17 Women's National Commission, *The Other Half of our Future*, Cabinet Office, London, 1985.
18 Susan Lucas and Peter Ward, *A Survey of Access Courses in England*, University of Lancaster, School of Education, 1985.

Chapter 9 'Adult' and 'continuing' for the class of women

1 ILEA Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee/Further and Higher Education Sub-committee, *Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls in Community Education*, Report by Education Officer, 1984.
2 Enid Hutchinson, 'Making their mark on mankind', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 4 May 1984.
3 European Bureau of Adult Education and National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Seminar Report – *Women and Adult Education, Learning New Roles for A Changing World*, 1980, p. 13.
4 Jane Thompson, *Learning Liberation – women's responses to men's education*, Croom Helm, 1983.
5 Women's Advisory Group, *Statement to Members of the NIACE Council and Executive Committee*, 1985.
6 MSC, *Towards an Adult Training Strategy – a discussion paper*, 1983, para. 17.

7 Ibid, paras. 14 and 18.

8 MSC, *Adult Training Strategy – proposals for action*, 1983, paras. 2(c) and (d).

9 United Nations Decade for Women, 1976–85, *Report by Non-governmental Organisations in preparing for the End of Decade World Conference*, Nairobi, 1985, Topic, *Education*.

10 European Bureau of Adult Education – Seminar Report, *Policy and Legislation in Adult Education: action for development*, September 1984, pp. 82-3.

Index

Access, 5; appropriate, 38; courses, 84–93; *Access Courses in England*, 107; Fresh Horizons comparison, 86–7; growth in provision, 90–3; limits of, 106–7
Act of Divorce 1971, 9
Adult education, 1, 64
Adults' Saturday School, 3
Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE), 74

'Back to Business' course, 63
Birkbeck College, 96
Bly, Sheila, 4
Breakaway, 65
Bronte, Charlotte, 8
Byrne, Eileen, 11, 28

Cambridge College of Art and Technology, 67
Child benefit, 12
City and Guilds, 28
City Lit, 2, 4, 5, 21–2, 24, 32, 62, 78–80
Colleges of further education, 103–5
Community Health Council, 68
Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), 97, 98; Clearing House, 45
Counselling, 44–6
Courses: evening, 43, full-time, 41–2, part-time by day, 39–41, single sex or mixed, 18–21

Decision-making and discovery, 43–4
Demographic Review, 9
Divorce and management, 8–10

Edinburgh, University of, 72
Education Act 1944, 2
Educational qualifications, 16
Education and training after school, 27–8
Elizabeth House, 105
Employment, 28–30; and women, 10–12
Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), 5
European Economic Community (EEC), 63
European Social Fund, 67, 72
Evans, Norman, 99
Experiential learning, 1
Extension of Access to Higher Education, 97

Family and other changes, 35
Fresh Horizons: courses, 1, 3, 4, 14, 18–20, 22, 23, 32–3, 35; students, 3, 19, 51, 56; tutors, 17, 50
Fresh Start: courses, 3, 18, 23, 56; education, 7; tutors, 18
Funding, 23
Further Opportunities in Focus, 65

General Certificate of Education (GCE), 73, 75
General Household Survey, 15, 16
Good, Martin, 91
Gradgrind, 1
Groombridge, Professor Brian, 96
Gross National Product, 11

Hatfield Polytechnic, 65
Helstone, Caroline, 8
Higher education, 50-1, 94–107
Higher National Certificate (HNC), 17
Hillcroft College, 13, 70
Home and family, 31
Husen, Professor Torsten, 117
Hutchinson, Enid, 2

Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), 2, 21, 80–1, 109–12
Interrupted schooling, 24–7

Lambert, Phoebe, 13, 96
Lancaster, University of, 96
Learning Later, 2
Lewis, Mary, 66
Lindop: Committee, 98; Report, 98–9
London: and higher education, 50–8; Fresh Horizons courses, 62; full-time students, 50–8; part-time students, 45; women students, 120

Manpower Services Commission (MSC), 12, 95
Marriage, 8–10; divorce and, 8–10
Martin and Roberts, 10, 11, 29, 30, 31
Martineau, Harriet, 109
Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act, 10
Mature entrants, 102–3
Men: and the family; 14; moving on, 17; work experience, 15–17
Michaels, Ruth, 65
Mill, John Stuart, 112
Millins Report on Access courses, 85–6, 87, 90
Mixed courses, 18

National Certificate in Engineering, 16
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), responsibility of, 114
New Opportunities for Women (NOW): courses, 65; students, 105
Northern College, 70

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), 9; classification, 12
Open College: of North West, 4, 74; of South London, 81–2
Open University (OU), 13, 73, 101
Ordinary National Certificate (ONC), 17

Pates, Andrew, 91
Percy, Keith, 76, 82
Personal factors, problems, 37–8; relationships, 23

Registrar-General, 11

Reid, Sheila, 30
Report of the Women's National Commission, 106
Richmond: Adult and Community College, 3, 22–3, 24, 62; courses, 44; Saturday students, 44; women students, 58–60, 121

Saturday School, Adults', 3
Schooling upsets, 33-4
Second Chances, 91
Second Chance Opportunities and Education for Women (SCOPE), 4, 66, 67, 122
Smith, Amy H., 108
Spender, Dale, 113
Socio-economic groups, 29
Statistical summary, 118–37
Stoney, Sheila, 30, 104
Student reflections, 46–9
Students: evening, 36–7, 43, 54–5; full-time, 32, 41–3, 55–8; part-time day 24, 39, 51-4
Swarthmore Centre, Leeds, 3, 68–70, 122

Tight, Malcolm, 102
Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS), 28, 72

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), 30, 72
Wolverton, Lady, 108
Women and employment, 10–12
Women's National Commission, 116–7
Women's occupational groups, 29
Women students, full-time 55–8
Women's studies, adult education and, 112, 113
Work and training, 34–5
Workers Educational Association (WEA), 64

Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), 4, 65, 66–7, 118, 122
Youth Training Scheme (YTS), 104